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The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

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M8 (A Hearthly Hand Shake)



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M10 (The Mask)



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**COVER PHOTOS:** Vincent Price in *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* (1958),  
Danny DeVito as the Penguin, and Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes.

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# Scarlet Letters

Thank you for such a good "piece" and pictures of me and Jimmy Olsen, too, in your first anniversary issue of *Scarlet Street*. It's a really intriguing magazine. I enjoyed every article.

Much success to you all and to *Scarlet Street* in years to come.

Jack Larson  
Los Angeles, CA

I read the two evaluations of *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* (1960) by Michael Brunas and Richard Valley. Valley's is, of course, the far more perceptive and intelligent one. I wasn't hired to write an epic (it was budgeted at £150,000, which in those days was about \$350,000). I think Sidney and the producers did a hell of a job with so little, and in color yet. Let me set Brunas straight on a few of his snide and childish points. The Phillips character never slept with anyone. The remark "It's all in the line of duty," or whatever, refers to his relentlessly pursuing Monlaur to get information. Only Rossiter and Monlaur have screwed around with the ladies.

Herman Cohen indeed! He had absolutely nothing to do with this film. I was on the set almost every day, and he was nowhere in sight! Julian Wintle and Leslie Parkins were delightful and perceptive gentlemen. They gave Sidney and me a free hand, and we certainly delivered the goods. Sam Arkoff still glows at the memory of the ten millions the film grossed, and in those times, yet!

The circus audience was authentic. They were filmed during various performances and that stuff is delightful. In New York, paired with the deadly awful *ICE PALACE* (1960), after the *New York Times* review, *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* was placed on top of the bill on the RKO circuit.

Thank you, Mr. Valley, for recognizing the fact that all the criminals became solid, hard-working citizens!

*Scarlet Street* is a delight. You should do a story on Barbara Shelley, Hammer's Queen of Horror. She was in my *SHADOW OF THE CAT* (1961), and she's still beautiful!

George Baxt  
Los Angeles, CA

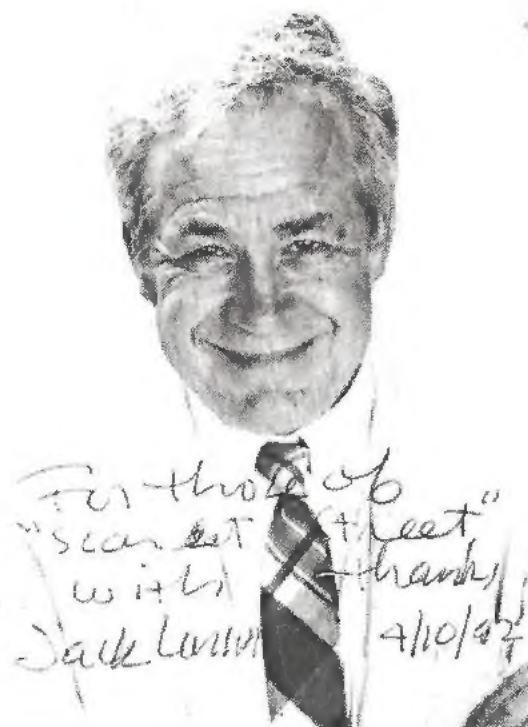
Michael Brunas replies: *It's possible that I may have somewhat overstated Herman Cohen's contribution to CIRCUS OF HORRORS, though I'm certainly not the first to compare the movie to Cohen's earlier HOR-*

*RORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM* (1959). My information was based on my own observations from watching the movie and, more important, on direct interview quotes which Tom Weaver solicited from Mr. Cohen last year and which I have no reason to dispute.

The circus audience was obviously authentic. My only quibble was the editor's tendency to cut to glaringly inappropriate reaction shots, which kept reminding me I was watching an American International movie.

As far as the piece being snide or childish, it was, like it or not, an absolutely honest reaction to a movie I consider hopelessly steeped in the sexist attitudes of a bygone era. This may well be the minority view, as the film still enjoys a considerable following and will assuredly emerge from the controversy with its reputation intact.

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**JACK LARSON**



I would like to express my enjoyment of your publication. The tribute to the (may I say) classic *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* was first-rate. What a wildly entertaining film, worthy of many repeat viewings. One of my all-time favorites.

I hope you will do some sort of feature on *THE AVENGERS*. It would be nice to see critiques of producers Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens' feature films *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* (1974) and *DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE* (1972). I like how your magazine (or, at least, issue #6) has reviews on many films of the past. I'd also like to know how many episodes there were of the great TV series *ONE STEP BEYOND*. Any help?

Fredric Cooper  
Torrance, CA

Thank you for the praise. *ALCOA PRESENTS: ONE STEP BEYOND*, the original title, which was later shortened for syndication, aired on ABC from January 1959 to October 1961 at 10:00PM on Tuesdays. There were a total of 94 episodes produced.

You really do have a superior publication on your hands, and one that is certainly deserving of the acclaim it receives! By the way, I really appreciated the extended coverage of *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* and thought the overall circus theme was positively brilliant! Insofar as hitting 100 pages goes, you have my deepest sympathies. I'm still struggling to get *Videooze* #4 in shape to go to press, and it's only 32!

Robert E. Sargent  
Editor, *Videooze*  
Alexandria, VA

It was good to see an article on the film versions of *Conjure Wife* [*Scarlet Street* #4], especially *BURN WITCH, BURN* (1962), which is too little remembered. However, the author neglected to mention a third adaptation of the novel that was made for TV in 1960, under its original title. It was the second installment of an hour-long anthology series entitled *MOMENT OF FEAR*. The adaptor was Ernest Kinoy, the leading actor was Larry Blyden, and the producer

was Bob Stevens. Who the director was, I haven't been able to find out. The show was telecast live on NBC on July 8. That was only a year before BURN WITCH, BURN was made, so maybe one inspired the other.

Incidentally, there's an apparent reference to BURN WITCH, BURN—a stone eagle of menacing aspect—in another movie about witches, SUSPIRIA (1977).

Eliot T. Stearns  
Marina del Rey, CA

Let me begin this letter by stating my unfeigned admiration for *Scarlet Street* and Richard Valley's contributions to it. Each issue is a treat.

It was with no little dismay, then, that I read your attack upon Nigel Bruce's portrayal of Dr. John H. Watson, in the Sherlock Holmes films starring Basil Rathbone.

*Scarlet Street* #5 contains part four of your series HOUNDED BY HOLMES. On page 69, the second paragraph is devoted primarily to a derogation of Mr. Bruce's performance. It is with this criticism that I take issue, for I think a closer examination of his interpretation of the character will show that it was not at all "antithetical"—your word, sir—to the character of Watson as conceived by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

There is more to compare than contrast between the two. Both were good, solid, British gentlemen, and intently loyal to Sherlock Holmes. Each was a competent

medical doctor. Where the Watson of print had at times an active medical practice, Bruce's Watson was never at fault when a cogent medical opinion was required.

Surely there can be no arguing that the Dr. Watsons of print and screen were staunch fighting men. Neither the Canon nor the Basil Rathbone film series contains even a suggestion that Watson would hesitate to follow Sherlock Holmes into danger. Nor was either Watson unaware of the charms of the fairer sex.

Certainly Nigel Bruce was, as you wrote, "the master of bumble and bluster". That was his acting style, as a viewing of any of his non-Sherlockian films will show. Yet these mannerisms were an addition to the character of Watson as he was conceived for the screen.

Here we have the real fault in Nigel Bruce's Watson: Hollywood. The producers at Twentieth Century Fox and Universal required no more from Dr. Watson than they did from many detective-film supporting characters of the day. He was a stand-in for the audience, dull enough that the hero had to tell him (and us) what was going on.

This, of course, is exactly why Conan Doyle created Watson in the first place. In fact, the stories in which Holmes himself is the narrator are among the weakest in the Canon.

Mr. Valley, you yourself noted that Nigel Bruce was fully capable of playing

Watson straight. I think that if you try to overlook the misuse of the character of Watson by Fox, and to a much larger extent by Universal, you'll see that in Nigel Bruce's interpretation of the part there truly is more than meets the eye.

With forgiveness for your nasty crack that "a die-hard Bruce fan [is] someone who's rarely read Conan Doyle..."

Mark J. McGovern  
Chamberlain of the Beakers  
The Stormy Petrels of Maumee Bay  
Toledo, OH

I subscribe to *Scarlet Street*, which is terrific, by the way! In *Scarlet Street* #5, I loved reading about Barbara Hale, Jack Larson, and Noel Neill. Richard Valley and Jessie Lilley, you both do a great job. Each page holds the reader's interest, which is very rare for me, because I like to skip pages. However, when reading *Scarlet Street*, you don't want to miss one page. Keep up the fantastic work.

Annette Matonti  
Ridgewood, NJ

As to the unavailability of THRILLER (*Scarlet Street* #5, SCARLET LETTERS), I wrote repeatedly to Universal and the smaller stations in an effort to get the reruns back on the air. The Arts & Entertainment network seemed genuinely interested. I also wrote to Goodtimes and Rhino Home Video suggesting an authorized

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line of VHS tapes. Some THRILLER episodes (e.g., "The Devil's Ticket") have stayed with me since childhood, and haunt me still.

The "scarecrow come to life" is as old as the silent film *PURITAN PASSIONS* (1923) with Osgood Perkins (Tony's father) as the Devil.

Someone please beg Herk Harvey, director of 1962's *CARNIVAL OF SOULS* (*Scarlet Street* #6), to make another horror film (hopefully in black and white) before he leaves us, like Charles Laughton, with only one creepy classic.

Thank you for your time.  
Hunter Jones  
Clifton, NJ

I must praise your magazine! It's original, it's fun, and truly enjoyable! I picked up issue #5 for the Christopher Lee interview. It was incredible! He is my very favorite actor, and I'd love to see and hear more about him in your magazine.

Jacqueline Mahan  
W. Haverstraw, NY

*Scarlet Street's* fall issue will feature another Christopher Lee interview, courtesy of Cinemax. We'll also have part one of our exclusive interview with Lee's friend and frequent co-star, Peter Cushing.

Your anniversary issue (*Scarlet Street* #5) has to be commended for its overall quality. Perhaps some of the pieces were not of personal interest to me, but I found more than enough material to provide interest and delight.

Mr. Valley's interview with Jack Larson was nothing short of wonderful, and I can't wait to read the second installment with Ms. Neill.

Likewise, I was delighted with the interviews of Mr. Lee and Mr. Macnee. Any one of your readers would doubtless consider it a joy to exchange even a few words with these legends—how nice to listen in on your chat.

Doubtless, your UNIVERSAL VS. HAMMER piece will draw the reader response you seek. As most readers may know through his other writings, Mr. Michael Brunas is well-associated with Universal. I'd heard his works referred to enough times to decide to seek them out—until I read his *Scarlet Street* piece.

I'm not going to address the particulars brought up by Mr. Brunas. That's already been thoroughly and expertly done by writer Ben Arnold in his definitive article "Hammer Discovers Horror", which appeared in *Pure Images* #3 (Mar./Apr. 1991). Rather, I take particular exception to the general tone of Brunas's piece. It

brought to mind something of a political campaign wherein the "defense" is to launch a smear attack. The atmosphere of the piece was not only negative, but also downright hostile.

Hammer defender Tom Johnson handled the matter pretty well, considering. The outrageous misinterpretations presented by Brunas had to be addressed at least, if not painstakingly corrected. Johnson chose wisely, and decidedly rose above the occasion. Indeed, both formulas tired quickly and neither studio offered more than a dozen memorable efforts.

The point is, of course, how thankful we are to have these works to quibble over!

Terry Roark  
Lancaster, PA

I've got to have my say on the Universal/Hammer debate. I find the whole debate rather interesting—and more than a bit silly and almost a total waste of time. Still, arguing about merits that can't be reasonably compared seems to give a lot of people pleasure, so. . .

As publisher and editor of the world's only totally Hammer-oriented publication, I probably have more Hammer corre-

Continued on page 9

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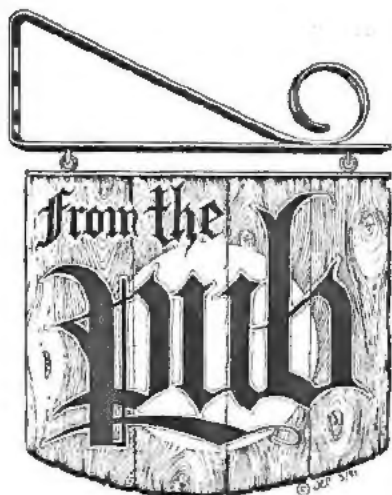
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"This *Scarlet Street* thing is really taking off, have you noticed?"

I overheard that comment at New Jersey's Chiller Con in May. Yes, I've noticed. It sure is taking off. For instance, at Fanex 5, writer Tom Weaver introduced us to Yvette Vickers. She's a charming and gracious woman, and OUR DINNER WITH YVETTE is in this issue. This past spring, your publisher and editor-in-chief had occasion to lunch with, and interview, Ray Harryhausen. You'll find it—the interview, not the lunch—in an upcoming issue.

I take this opportunity to thank legendary *Famous Monsters* editor Forrest J Ackerman for granting us a short piece for this issue. Forry's been a staunch supporter of *Scarlet Street* all along. Not only has he regularly given us information for our NEWSBITES, but he has provided us with his personal written endorsement, and of course, that wonderful interview in

Issue # 4. I am delighted to add his name, however temporarily, to our masthead.

Tom Weaver's new book *Poverty Row Horrors* will be coming soon from McFarland, but you can have a sneak peek! See BLUEBEARD, co-written by Michael Brunas, on page 27.

One final word on conventions: Gary and Sue Svehla inform us that, sadly, this summer's will be the last Fanex. So make sure you get there! This is your last chance. *Scarlet Street* will attend, and Richard and I will be on a few panels. We'll also be roaming the halls gathering more interviews for you, our readers, and hopefully meeting some of you, too. So come on up and say "hi".

Do you guys really want *Scarlet Street* t-shirts?

*Jessie Ellis*

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<b>VINCENT PRICE</b><br/> <input type="checkbox"/> House on Haunted Hill (59)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Fall of the House of Usher (60)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Pit and the Pendulum (61)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Tales of Terror (61)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Hanged Man (63)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Raven (63)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Last Man on Earth (64)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Maniacs of the Red Death (64)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Tomb of Ligeia (64)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Conqueror Worm (68)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Oblong Box (69)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Cry of the Banshee (70)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Theater of Blood (73)<br/> <b>JEAN ROULIN</b><br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Le Frisson des Vampires (70/In Spanish)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Requiem for a Vampire (71)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Zombie Lake (81)<br/> <b>DARIO ARGENTO</b><br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Bird with the Crystal Pinnafe (70)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Cat O' Nine Tails (71)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Red (75)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Suspiria (76/In Italian)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Inferno (80)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Usurpation (82)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Creepers (84)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Opera (88)<br/> <b>PETE WALKER</b><br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Die Screaming Marianne (70)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Flesh and Blood Show (72)<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> House of Whipcord (74)</p> |
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Continued from page 6

spondence than anyone else. And I don't see this "anti-Universal" camp Michael Brunas speaks of. I find most Hammer fans are equally avid Universal fans. Like mine, their video collections include as many classic Universal horrors as they do Hammer. If they are a bit more Hammer-oriented, it might be because they were exposed to Hammer at an earlier and impressionable age. (Universal came into my world in 1969, at the age of 22. Before that, nothing had appeared on television where I lived.)

Was the best of Universal better than the best of Hammer? Certainly. It would be a total shock if it weren't. The original Universal horrors were first-class releases from a studio that was either a major/minor or minor/major film company. BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) cost almost \$400,000 to make. It was the 70s, 15 years after CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957), before Hammer was allowed to spend that kind of money (and in inflation-adjusted dollars).

Judging by Universal's output in the 40s, a comparison becomes more valid. Universal had relegated its horror output to the programmer level and, nostalgic though it may be, how can one favor FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943) over BRIDES OF DRAC-

ULA (1960)? A comparison becomes valid because the studios' respective resources become equal—more "apples to apples".

Why do people about to trash Hammer always start with "I do like Hammer, but..."? Brunas writes off the whole 70s Hammer output. Honestly, Hammer produced some decent—really decent—films during that period, full of new ideas. VAMPIRE LOVERS (1971), VAMPIRE CIRCUS (1971), BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1972), TWINS OF EVIL (1972), CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (1974): I like these films.

I keep hearing the word "artistry" in relation to Universal. It's become the catchword for "shot in black and white with a lot of shadows". Get off the black-and-white kick and you'll see some truly impressive artistry in Hammer: many of the scenes from 1959's MUMMY, 1964's CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB (Fred Clark's scene on the stairwell), and 1968's DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE.

And what is all this crap about "camera movement", as if that is the sign of a creative director? Directing is storytelling, not visual games. If it is tricky camera work we're after, I can come up with directors who shot rings around James Whale (but they couldn't carry his cigar as storytellers). Does anyone ever watch

Terence Fisher's films before criticizing them? Fisher did move the camera. The scenes he created crowd my mind: the terrified werewolf climbing into the bell tower in CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961), the camera aimed toward the angry mob below; Peter Cushing and Freddie Jones' finely-choreographed confrontation in FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED (1970); the ritual that revives Dracula in DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS (1966). Both Whale and Fisher were master storytellers; they just played the game differently. It seems to drive Universal fans crazy that Fisher made excellent films on what would have been "walking-around money" for Whale. They'll say anything to keep from giving credit to Fisher for his films.

"The British studio relied heavily on unknowns and second-rate actors." Huh? Unknown to American audiences, maybe. Second-rate? Give me a break! Andre Morell, Barbara Shelley, Michael Gwynn, Richard Wordsworth, Oliver Reed, Clifford Evans, Martita Hunt: Shakespearean actors, classically trained. Yes, Hammer did resort to beginners for younger characters, but I'll stack Veronica Carlson against Universal's contract actresses.

"Roger Corman, the darling of the critics..." Huh? I've purchased every book on Corman, and the current love

affair is almost totally concerned with his never having made films that lost money. Corman is a business phenomenon who just happened to make fantasy films.

Maybe the Universal group should lighten up. Gregory Mank was at the 1990 Fanex convention in Baltimore. I love his work, have purchased all his books, and I wanted to introduce myself to him. I told him about myself, my magazine, and my involvement with Hammer. He looked at me as if he were a concentration-camp survivor and I were Hitler's official biographer. I'm sure he meant no harm by it, but I backed away. If someone with Universal credentials had introduced themselves to me, I would have been fascinated. (No disrespect to Mr. Mank; I'm sure he didn't realize what effect the incident had.)

So, the Universal/Hammer tiff goes on. Interesting, I guess. Pointless in the extreme, though. . . .

Dick Klemensen  
Editor, *Little Shoppe of Horrors*  
Des Moines, IA

Michael Brunas replies: *I didn't mean to ruffle so many feathers when setting out to write UNIVERSAL vs. HAMMER. At the time it seemed like a good idea to put into writing the spirited but good-natured debate I've been having for ages with my old chum Tom Johnson.*

*Since my allotted space is limited, I'll resist the temptation to counter Dick Klemensen's arguments and ignore Terry Roark's intemperate and unfair comments altogether. It will probably surprise them both that, at the time my book Universal Horrors was released, the brickbats were being hurled from the other side, especially from irate fans who accused me and my co-authors of being Universal-haters! I agree with Dick that some lightening up is in order here, but from all sides.*

Your magazine is wonderful. I'm afraid I'm coming into it rather late. I bought my first issue last week, and I'm afraid the retailer I purchased it from is running a little behind; it's the Winter 91 issue, and I'm reasonably sure that a Spring and quite possibly a Summer issue have already hit the shelves. From now on, I plan on being a thorn in the side of my friendly neighborhood bookseller, and pestering the living daylights out of him until he gets your magazine.

Anyway, back to the congratulations. I'll admit, I'm probably not as big on Sherlock Holmes as many of your readers—I've read my share, and *Hound of the Baskervilles* remains one of my all-time favorites. As far as trivia and expert knowledge go, I'm probably way out-classed. I am, however, a horror junkie,

and *Scarlet Street* has gotten me excited. I've sorely missed *FM*; even though magazines like *Fangoria* and its clones are well-intentioned, they simply don't fill the void, but a magazine that would devote space to the eternal Hammer vs. Universal battle, well, that's one to consider. Ever since I read the articles, I've been sharpening my verbal claws, trying to find the best way to jump into the argument. I want to thank you for providing the arena for that fight.

It's been quite a while since I've found so many people who seem to like the same things I do in one place. This is great! Please, keep it up!

Paul Johnson  
Jonesboro, AR

Thanks for the delightful interview with Noel Neill in *Scarlet Street* #6, a fine companion to the Jack Larson piece in the previous issue.

To abet Ms. Neill's remembrances, she was fourth-billed in 1949's *THE SKY DRAGON*, assaying the role of Jane Marshall, in what became the final entry of the Charlie Chan film series. Other members of the cast included Elena Verdugo, star of 1944's *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, and future Lex Luthor (1950's *ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN*) Lyle Talbot.

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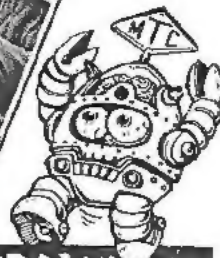
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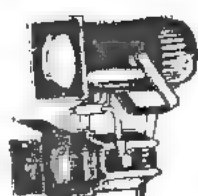
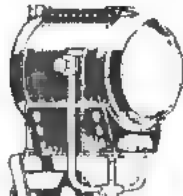


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Also, for credit completists everywhere, other members of the cast of *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* and their characters were Domini Blythe (Anna Mueller), John Brown (Schilt), Mary Wimbush (Elvira), Christina Paul (Rosa), Sibylla Kay (Mrs. Schilt), Dorothy Frere (Granma Schilt), Sean Hewitt (First Soldier), Giles Phibbs (Sexton), Jason James (Foreman), and Arnold Locke (Old Villager).

In keeping with the feature on carnivals and circuses in the genre of horror, mention should also have been made of *TERROR CIRCUS*, a.k.a. *BARN OF THE NAKED DEAD* (1973), *MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD* (1973), and *THE FUNHOUSE* (1981).

Nice job all around, staffers!  
David H. Smith  
Oakland Park, FL

I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Scarlet Street* #6 and am very pleased that such a publication exists. I am a very big fan of Sherlock Holmes, and especially Jeremy Brett's portrayal.

I am also a big fan of 60s secret agents, the programs *SECRET AGENT*, *THE PRISONER*, and *THE AVENGERS* in particular. I'd love to see some articles on anything from that genre. Well, looking forward to future issues of *Scarlet Street*.

Carrie Pratt  
Seattle, WA

Just as I finished issue #5, *Scarlet Street* #6 showed up in my mailbox. I guess the postman thought he should get to read the issues before I do. Issue #5 must have fallen into a time warp, or I've got to stop watching all those *TWILIGHT ZONE* reruns.

Both issues were very well done. In issue #5, the big *UNIVERSAL* vs. *HAMMER* debate was interesting, but it is really a moot point. I'm a *Lugosi* fan, but hey, this stuff is all just a bunch of movies, and I can't take either side seriously. I remember arguing with my parents just to watch any of it, let alone having to take sides.


I find that Jeremy Brett, David Burke, and Edward Hardwicke fit my mind's image of Holmes and Watson better than any of the other actors who have assayed the parts. They do so well that I've gone back to rereading the stories.

Please, no *STAR TREK*. For any info on *ST*, I can pick up the latest issue of *Cinefantastique* and get my fill. I, for one, am tired of Shatner, Nimoy, and the rest. *ST: THE NEXT GENERATION* is very hit-or-miss. Only a few of the episodes are out of the space-opera category and really thought-provoking or entertaining. The same goes for *BATMAN*. I cringed during the 60s TV show, and the Burton films are not much of an improvement. Bigger budgets, yes, but not much soul. Even the big-screen *ADDAMS FAMILY* (1991) was fun, but quickly forgotten.

Issue #6, with its circus theme, was great fun. I enjoyed *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* and the two views of *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*—fun films that have been sadly neglected over the years.

Well, keep up the good work, and congrats on your first anniversary!

Lynn Naron  
Seattle, WA



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DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 37 (No. DI-37)

**NIGHT TIDE** (1961) Dennis Hopper, Linda Lawson, Luana Patten. Directed by Curtis Harrington. An excellent low budget horror film that captures much of the same mood and feeling as *CARNIVAL OF SOULS*. A lonely sailor on leave becomes fascinated with a sideshow mermaid girl. He comes to face with the terrifying, growing realization that she may actually be a real mermaid that habitually kills during the cycle of the full moon. From Roger Corman's Filmgroup Company.

**BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN** (1963) Ed Perry, Andy Stewart, Bruce Hunter. Another one of Roger Corman's Russian films which uses lots of footage from the Soviet space epic, *NEBO ZOVET*. Two rival countries race to have the first successful landing on Mars. Some terrific outer space scenes, yet we're also treated to some really hilarious looking monsters doing battle against each other. From a rare color print.



DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 38 (No. DI-38)

**ISLAND OF LOST GIRLS** (1973) Brad Harris, Tony Kendall, Monica Pardo. A very raucy, early 70s exploitation/action film filled with flying fists and lots of scantily clad ladies. American agents try and track down missing girls who've been kidnapped by a sleazy white slavery operation. Set somewhere in the Orient. Not exactly high art, but definitely not boring. Rated 'R'.

**FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE OF FREAKS** (1973) Rossano Brazzi, Michael Dunn, Boris Lugosi. That's right Boris Lugosi! No relation to either horror film star, this actor's name appears to be some kind of an inside joke. *SOUTH PACIFIC* star Brazzi plays the mad baron who continues with his nefarious experiments. Dunn plays a leering dwarf who spies on skinny dipping beauties. Lugosi plays Ock, the mad chameleon. Definitely rated 'R'.



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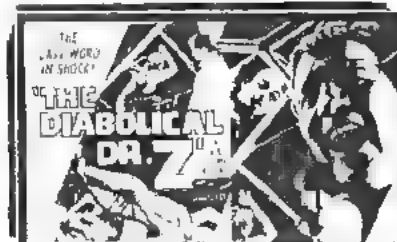


BARBARA STEELE

DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 39 (No. DI-39)

**NIGHTMARE CASTLE** (1965) Barbara Steele, Paul Miller, Rik Battaglia. In one of her best films, Barbara plays two sisters, one good, one bad. The evil one dies horribly at the hands of her jealous husband who catches her and her lover in the act. He then plots against the good sister until the evil one rises from the dead to seek a very horrifying revenge. Barbara's half decomposed face is revealed in an unforgettable final scene.

**DIABOLICAL DR. Z** (1965) Howard Vernon, Mabel Karr, Estella Blain. The opening sequence of this Jesse Franco horror thriller may literally give you a splitting headache. A mad scientist and his scheming daughter are up to no good in a mysterious castle. The daughter seeks revenge against her father's enemies. Lots of lab scenes and murders. Somewhat related to the Dr. Orloff films.



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**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 46 (No. D1-46)**

**THE EYE CREATURES** (1965) John Ashley, Cynthia Hull. A lot of people have been under the impression over the years that Larry Buchanan's horror/sci-fi films were released only to television, but a few of them were actually released on the Southern Drive-In circuit. Invading Aliens match wits with a group of typical, 'smarter' than the local authorities' teenagers who manage to outwit the monsters and send them packing by movie's end.

**ZONTAR, THE THING FROM VENUS** (1966) John Agar, Anthony Houston. A bat-like alien from outer space lands on earth and enlists the aid of a disgruntled scientist in his plot to conquer the world. The monster is eventually responsible for killing about half the people in town, as well as the wife of the scientist. Not that it's saying a whole lot, but this is probably director Larry Buchanan's best film.

**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 40 (No. D1-40)**

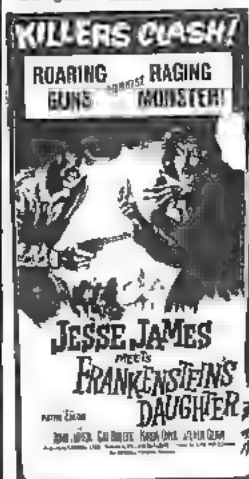
**TORMENTED** (1960) Richard Carlson, Juli Redding, Eugene Sanders, Susan Gordon. Great fun as Carlson plays a husband-to-be who's haunted by the ghost of his incredibly large-breasted ex-girlfriend whom he allowed to fall to her death from the top of an old, abandoned eight house. One terrific scene has Carlson holding up the ghost's head as it screams "Tom Stewart killed me!" It was re-released in certain areas as the second feature with **HANDS OF A STRANGER** during the latter's initial release.

**HANDS OF A STRANGER** (1962) James Cagney, Paul Lukas, Joan Harvey, Irish McCalla. Lots of screaming and finger-smashing in this very underrated sci-fi/horror opus. A docu-murderer's hands are grafted to a pianist who's lost his own hands in a traffic accident. Unable to perform again, he goes mad and seeks revenge on those responsible for his condition. Look for Sally Kellerman in a small role.

**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 41 (No. D1-41)**

**BILLY THE KID VS. DRACULA** (1958) John Carradine, Chuck Courtney, Virginia Christine, Roy Barcott. One of the great bad movies of the 1950s. Carradine plays the evil Count for the first time since **HOUSE OF DRACULA**. He poses as the uncle of a pretty young girl that owns a cattle ranch. Her foreman/boyfriend, just happens to be Billy the Kid, who's trying to go straight. Top of the line schlock. Directed by Bill One Shot Beaudine.

**JESSE JAMES MEETS FRANKENSTEIN'S SON'S DAUGHTER** (1966) John Lupton, Narda Onys, Cal Barker, Jim Davis. It's hard to believe, but this is even funnier and campier than the companion film listed above. Baron Frankenstein's granddaughter is determined to carry on the family tradition. She transplants the brain of the original Frankenstein Monster into the skull of one of Jesse's pals. Some of the best bad acting you'll ever see. "You are... igit!" Priceless.



**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 42 (No. D1-42)**

**THE CRAWLING EYE** (1958) Forest Tucker, Janet Munro. An excellent British sci-fi thriller about a group of people in a mountain top resort who are threatened by horrible monsters invading the Earth from outer space. Lots of heads being ripped off. Seidom has a British sci-fi film looked and felt like more like one of its grade 'B' American counterparts. Kind of like **THE KILLER SHEPHERDS** on top of a mountain. Special effects are somewhat crude, but double.

**COSMIC MONSTERS** (1958) Forest Tucker, Gaby Andre, Martin Benson. Listen to this synopsis: while conducting a series of strange experiments, a research scientist blows a hole in the ionosphere which leads to an invasion of the Earth by giant, killer insects. When all seems lost, an alien arrives in a flying saucer and saves the world from destruction. Based on a BBC TV serial.

**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 43 (No. D1-43)**

**THE MAGIC SWORD** (1961) Basil Rathbone, Gary Lockwood, Anne Helm, Vampira. Beautiful color! Rathbone is tremendous as the evil Lodoc who kidnaps a young princess. Her would-be rescuers must overcome a series of horrible curses in order to save her. Dragons, ogres, monsters, witches, etc. are all featured in this colorful epic that gave kids of our nightmares when we were kids. Much better than usual Bert Gordon special effects. Bert also directed.

**DR. BLOOD'S COFFIN** (1962) Keron Moore, Hazel Court, Ian Hunter. Top notch British horror. In color too. People are mysteriously disappearing near a lonesome Welsh village where a mad doctor conducts weird experiments with life and death in an underground cave. A stylish film reminiscent of the Hammer horror films of the same time period. The dead return to life in a very gruesome climax. Hazel's gorgeous.

**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 44 (No. D1-44)**

**WEB OF THE SPIDER** (1970) Anthony Franciosa, Michele Mercier. A foreign journalist runs into Edgar Allan Poe in a tavern where he hears Poe telling a supposedly true story about a haunted castle. The journalist is challenged to spend the night there and makes a wager that he'll emerge safe and sound in the morning. After arriving at the castle, he finds himself surrounded by a menagerie of the living dead. An outstanding remake of **CASTLE OF BLOOD**. From a beautiful new color print.

**SATANIK** (1968) Julio Pena, Madge Kaborika. A hideously ugly woman drinks a potion for beauty. It works! She then falls into a life of seduction and murder. Her scheme eventually backfires on her as the potion loses its potency and she is transformed into a horrible, ugly monster. A very rare and very unusual European horror film, not released here until 1970.



**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 45 (No. D1-45)**

**HIGH SCHOOL CAESAR** (1960) John Ashley, Lowell Brown, Judy Nugent. One of the best independent J.D. movies ever made. A rich teenager finds himself shunned at school because of his wealth. He sets up a high school protection racket that leads to all kinds of fun problems for school officials. Not babes and fast cars, this movie has a little bit of everything. Ashley is excellent. Way above average.

**DATE BAIT** (1963) Gary Clarke, Mario Ryan, Richard Gering. The ads for this one proclaimed, "To eager to say, 'I Do'." Boy meets girl. Love, lust, and trouble follow. Two teenagers are determined to run away and get married. There's just one thing getting in the way, their parents. Another nice little 'B' J.D. picture from Roger Corman's Filmgroup company.



**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 47 (No. D1-47)**

**MONSTER OF LONDON CITY** (1964) Marianne Koch, Hansjorg Falmay. While a play about Jack the Ripper's atrocities is being enacted at the Edgar Allan Poe Theater in London's Whitechapel district, similar murders are being committed for real in the city's dark districts. Is it one of the actors? A tense thriller from the master of mystery and horror, Bryan Edgar Wallace. Letterboxed for the scope format.

**PHANTOM OF SOHO** (1964) Barbara Rulling, Hans Schnker. A strip-tease club is the setting for a Scotland Yard investigation into a series of grisly murders committed by a hooded killer who always appears in a weird, skull-like mask. Another tense thriller from Bryan Edgar Wallace. Watch out for some very brief nudity. Letterboxed for the scope format.

**DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 48 (No. D1-48)**

**TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE** (1966) William Campbell, Sandra Knight, Jonathan Haze, Manassa Mathias, A Roger Corman production about a mad artist who believes he's the reincarnation of his vampiric ancestor. He dips his victims into molten wax, then paints them. Although the editing is shaky in a few places, this is a very enjoyable horror film with a large following. Well acted with some real nail-biting monster slaying his victims' scenes.

**PLANET OF BLOOD** (1968) Basil Rathbone, John Saxton, Dennis Hopper, Florence Marly. An expedition to Mars finds a crashed alien space ship. They bring back the only survivor, a green-skinned, glowing-eyed, bloodsucking, female alien who preys on the crew members. Another of Roger Corman's 'Russian' films with some absolutely spectacular outer-space shots, lifted from a Soviet sci-fi movie. Beautiful color.



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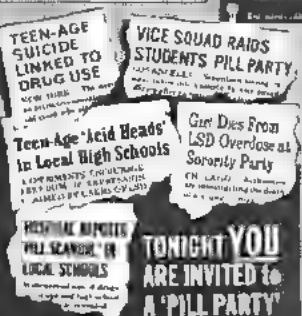
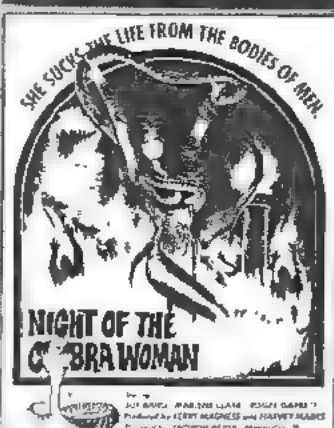
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HOW DID A 18-FOOT-TALL MONSTER GET INTO THAT LITTLE BIRTH SPACE CAPSULE?



# Our Scarlet Lady

by Scarlett O'Horror

How do you act opposite a giant leech? That's a question that, metaphoric'ly speakin', more'n a few actresses can address with conviction. There's really only one, though, who can answer the queasy query with the voice of experience, and she's the sexy subject of this here column: Miss Yvette Vickers.

Yvette had the oozy opportunity, back in the late 50s, to share a few intimate moments with the titular stars of *ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES*, and she lived to tell the tale. (Well, Yvette lived to tell the tale; the girl she played spent the flick's final reels bein' sucked to death!)

For a girl who's one of the sweetest we Scarlet Streeters have ever met, poor Yvette's passed a sizeable portion of her career gettin' herself trashed by magnitudinous monstrosities. A year before *THE GIANT LEECHES* used her as an ambulatory aperitif, she hooked up with a gent whose wife, even on her meekest day, could never be called "the little woman". Next thing she knew, Yvette found herself sufferin' from the *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*—and endin' up flatter'n a bug on a fat boy's sneaker. (Bein' a columnist of incomparable class and sophistication, I shall resist the temptation to make crass, sexist jokes 'bout the perversity of usin' the word "flat" in regard to curvaceous Yvette. This ain't *Femme Fatales*, y'know?)

Anyway, Yvette's one of the bes. actresses ever to come under *ATTACK(s)*, and I'm more'n a mite proud to make her this issue's Scarlet Lady.



Yvette Vickers

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# Frankly Scarlet



I can't recall precisely how it happened, but back in the early 60s, when as a mere boy and beardless youth I tried to catch every horror and sci-fi flick that came my way, I managed to miss the initial entries in American International's series of Edgar Allan Poe adaptations. (Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that, in my neck of New Jersey, only the local drive-in played the Poe pix, and I was disadvantaged by having neither a car nor sufficient years to be allowed to drive one.) It wasn't until 1964, at the Prospect Theatre on Ninth Avenue in Brooklyn, that I saw Vincent Price in an AIP picture. It was one of the rare ones that wasn't ripped screaming from the pages of Poe: *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS*, double-billed with *PYRO*. There on the screen were my heroes, all in one frightfully funny film: Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, and Basil ("I never made a horror movie") Rathbone. From that point on I was hooked, and I still remember that glorious evening in 1969 when the drive-in played *HOUSE OF Usher*, *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*, *TALES OF TERROR*, and *THE RAVEN* on a single bill, and I sat transfixed while my friends David and Drew begged me to call it a night.

This brief jaunt down Memory Lane is by way of welcoming to our pages that suave Merchant of Menace, Mr. Vincent Price, who was kind enough to grant an interview to *Scarlet Street's* Michael Orlando Yaccarino. I want to thank the un-

failingly generous Mr. Price for taking the time to talk to Michael. Thanks, too, to Michael for putting together a fine three-part piece on AIP's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*: the Price interview; an interview with the actor's co-star, Elizabeth Shepherd; and a telling analysis of the film.

Last issue's special SIDESHOW section, celebrating mystery and horror films with circus and carnival settings, proved so popular with readers that I've decided to make such sections a regular stop on *Scarlet Street*. This issue's *PEARLS OF GREAT PRICE*, celebrating you-know-who, continues the practice, and we'll be doing much the same with vampires and the legendary Peter Cushing in future issues. (Special thanks to Tom Weaver for polishing our Pearls with some intriguing background info culled from his collection.)

\*\*\*

Speaking of bloodsuckers—no, no; not Tom—Granada's latest two-hour Sherlock Holmes adventure is based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Sussex Vampire", and we have an exciting on-the-set preview from British correspondent David Stuart Davies, plus a brief chat with scriptwriter Jeremy Paul.

Things are in a state of flux at Granada. As of this writing, it seems that not only *THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE*, but also all subsequent Holmes shows, will have a two-hour format. Let's hope that Granada takes the opportunity to film the remaining novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Valley of Fear*. (The company proved itself capable, with *THE SIGN OF FOUR*, of paring down elaborate flashback sequences to fit time and budget restrictions. Besides, I'm itching to see Eric Porter return as Professor Moriarty.) Since the unfilmed short stories, for the most part, are not among the best—I make exception for such personal favorites as "Black Peter", "The Five Orange Pips", and "The Cardboard Box"—and since Granada now appears less inclined to Canonical faithfulness, this might also be the time to make wider use of Conan



Vincent Price

Doyle's supporting cast. Inspector G. Lestrade, Mrs. Hudson, Billy (whoever plays him), and the Baker Street Irregulars would not only add considerable interest to sometimes-meager tales, but also help to fill the additional hour. Perhaps we might even have another visit from Sherlock's brother, Mycroft Holmes; he'd certainly lend a proper governmental tone to the empire-threatening theft of "The Beryl Coronet".

In any event, I'm sure that we can expect another first-rate production from Granada. (As we went to press, word came that the show has been retitled *THE LAST VAMPIRE*.) Finally, if we seem to be anticipating the coming fall's vampire feast with several of this issue's pieces, well, we just couldn't wait—but wait until you see next issue's photos of Jeremy Brett as Count Dracula!

Richard Valley



*Sherlock Holmes (Jeremy Brett, that is) prepares to film a scene for Granada TV's adaptation of "The Sussex Vampire". For an exclusive Scarlet Street preview, fly on little bat wings to page 44.*

Photo by David Stuart Davies

Without Forrest J Ackerman, Editor Supreme of the legendary *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, it is doubtful that there would ever have been a *Scarlet Street*. Without Lon Chaney, mesmerizing star of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1925), *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* (1927), and *THE UNHOLY THREE* (1925 and 1930), it is less doubtful—but possible; anything is possible—that Forrest J Ackerman would ever have made monsters, famous or otherwise, his lifelong interest. Luckily for us, there was a Chaney, and there is a Forry, so *Scarlet Street* is proud to bring you the latest amusing musings of one Mr. Filmonster on the subject of another Mr. Filmonster. Listen well, ladies and gentlemen, because. . .

Photo courtesy of Richard Bojarski

# CHANNEY SPEAKS AGAIN!

by Forrest J Ackerman

**FAIR WARNING:** This has an unhappy ending. It's that oldest cliché in the world: and then I woke up and it was all a dream. But how often, 62 years after his death, does anyone dream about Lon Chaney? And live to tell the tale. I remember the dream so vividly, and it was so unusual, that I think you'll appreciate my sharing it with you.

I was rummaging thru some movie memorabilia I had acquired in Seattle when I ran across 3 fotos, 5" x 7", of Lon. The first one was recognizably from *TELL IT TO THE MARINES*. I noticed there was handwriting on the back, in pencil, as I laid one down, face up, on top of some unidentified piece of machinery next to me. Immediately there appeared on a television screen like we used to see in scientifilms like *METROPOLIS*, *HIGH TREASON*, and *JUST IMAGINE*, a moving picture of Lon as Sgt. Bull. But more than that, *he was speaking the lines written on the back of the foto!* In the dream I realized this meant that the words pencilled on the back of the still were in Chaney's handwriting and the machine they were lying on top of had the ability to translate them into sound! The next moment, the next character said something, and Lon responded. I grabbed the next picture and turned it over and, sure enough, in pencil there were a couple of other handwritings—one undoubtedly Lon's. I placed the picture on the machine. (When I woke and started reliving the dream—don't go 'way, there's more—I remembered a science-fiction short story from the 20s, "The Thought-girl" by the pioneering science-fiction author Ray Cummings, about a shelf in another dimen-

sion full of inventions waiting to be born. Cummings called it the Realm of Unthought Things. I from time to time have referred to an adaptation of his idea, the Realm of Unwrought Things. That must be where the invention lies that can translate the handwritten words of an individual into their voice!)

The dream continued. On the second foto Chaney spoke several sentences, which some woman criticized. He fell silent as he contemplated her remarks. Unfortunately, he did not speak again on that still. I never got around to the third. But I got so excited I had to rush out and tell the first person I encountered of my discovery.

The first person I encountered was—Clara Bow, the "It" Girl! The quintessential flapper of the 20s. She wasn't impressed. She wasn't in favor of turning someone's handwriting into talking. She was of the opinion it was an invasion of privacy! I was really taken aback.

Clara was up in the branches of a leafy green tree. The tree began to move away from me. I mustered a magnificent argument and called up to her as she was receding: "But what if the handwritten manuscript of Lincoln's

Gettysburg Address was found and we could actually hear him deliver it!" I'll never know how Clara would have felt about that because, \*%\*#! it, at that point I woke up!

Dream therapists in the audience, if this dream has a deep kinky sexological explanation, please mail it to me in a plain brown envelope.

And as for you, Clara Bow, I think I'll sic the Man of a Thousand Faces on you!



# BAT BEAT

**B**ATMAN RETURNS is not a sequel to BATMAN," says Tim Burton, director of both films. "It doesn't pick up where the first movie left off. There are lots of new elements in the visuals and story line that haven't been seen before. Even Batman's costume has been revised."

And that's why Tim Burton has gone to bat a second time with the Caped Crusader. BATMAN RETURNS again stars Michael Keaton as the Dark Knight. Michael Gough returns as Bruce Wayne's faithful butler, Alfred, and Pat Hingle is back as Police Commissioner James Gordon.

Batman's enemies this time out are none other than the Penguin, played by Danny DeVito; Catwoman, played by Michelle Pfeiffer; and Max Shreck, a scheming mega-millionaire portrayed by Christopher Walken.

"The legend of Batman is incredibly well-developed and fertile," Burton continues. "The heroes, villains, supporting characters, and story lines have been embellished over the years, first by Bob Kane in his original comics and then by everyone who's re-interpreted this material for film, graphic novels, and television. The temptation to delve into this legacy again, to put our own spin on Batman and his opponents, was irresistible. I just had to explore this character and his world further."

Putting his own spin on BATMAN RETURNS meant changing the Penguin (alias Oswald Cobblepot) into a half-human/half-bird mutant who crawls out of the Gotham City sewer system seeking revenge. Flanked by an army of loyal penguins and the treacherous Red Triangle Circus Gang, the fowl fiend forms an alliance with Shreck to hatch an evil plot that includes running for mayor.

"The Penguin is actually a very intelligent man," declares Danny DeVito, who plays him, "someone who has always wanted acceptance. He's a guy who is living in one world in his mind and another in reality. I mean, his parents took one look at him when he was a baby and totally rejected him. But if they had tried to understand that there was a human being inside that hideous 'penguin boy', he might have become another Einstein."

Catwoman is another villain whose allure—to Batman, as well as comic-book readers—has always been strong.

"Catwoman was certainly a childhood heroine of mine," claims Michelle Pfeiffer. "I used to watch the TV series and just wait for her to come on, and she was never on enough as far as I was concerned. I guess she just broke all the stereotypes of what it meant to be a woman. I found that shocking and forbidden. Also, I was probably at the age where I was coming into my own sexuality, and I just found Catwoman thrilling to watch."

"To me, BATMAN RETURNS has two strong stories which function well together," notes Dan Waters, the sequel's credited screenwriter. (There have been reports that Wesley Strick, who wrote 1991's CAPE FEAR, had a hand in BATMAN RETURNS.) "There's Batman versus the Penguin, and then there's the whole Batman/Catwoman/Bruce/Selina story. The subplot approaches issues of sex and desire and love and romance—as well as humor—in ways that I think are very rich."

Commenting on the Walken character, Max Shreck, whose name, with one letter added, is that of the German actor who portrayed the title vampire in 1922's NOSFERATU, Waters added, "Oh, it's absolutely intentional. Max Schreck played a character who sucked blood from the population...and Max Shreck is something of a vampire, sucking up energy, power, and money from Gotham City."

Among Batman's allies is Alfred, Bruce Wayne's dependable butler and friend. Michael Gough, a veteran of several Hammer films, perceives Alfred as "an old-fashioned man who tried to bring up Bruce Wayne as a little gentleman. Because, as a boy, Bruce lost both of his parents, Alfred had the great

responsibility of being both substitute father and mother to him."

Pat Hingle, who embodied Police Commissioner James Gordon's gruffness and compassion in BATMAN, created his own background to explain his character's bond of understanding with the Caped Crusader. "The way I see it," Hingle declares, "Gordon was a cop on the beat when the young Bruce Wayne watched his parents gunned down. Gordon was the first one to get to the scene of the crime. Somehow, when Batman made his first appearance in Gotham, Gordon knew that he had seen this person before."



*BATMAN RETURNS—in a newly-designed cowl and with far too much mascara 'round the eyeballs—in the person of Michael Keaton.*





**ABOVE:** Danny DeVito as the Penguin, who seems to have traded in his monocle for a contact lens. **BELOW RIGHT:** The Penguin figures he's safe as long as Batman has to stand on a box to appear taller.

To create the Penguin's avian army of commandos, programmed to execute his every order, real Blackfoot and King penguins were brought onto the set. These fowl actors were supported by 30 fully-articulated penguin puppets created by Stan Winston's effects studio.

According to Winston, "the biggest challenge in creating an army of penguins was doing the best we could to replicate real life, with anatomically and cosmetically correct penguins to perform and act under direction."

In addition to the puppets, four Emperor-penguin suits were created to be worn by performers of small stature. Actress Denise Killpack said that studying penguin behavior and movement before her on-set work began was a big help: "It was important to watch their behavior within a group, their slight neck movements, exactly how they walk. Then, when you're in costume, you visualize, remember, and transform yourself."

Further penguin effects were supplied by Boss Film Studios, who created computer-generated penguin images for certain fowl-filled scenes.

Bob Ringwood, costume designer on BATMAN, returned to dress the large cast of BATMAN RETURNS, joined by Mary Vogt, who did costumes for STAKEOUT (1987) and THE NAKED GUN (1988). The team found themselves working on a modification of Batman's cos-

tume, which was already a drastic revision of the Dark Knight's familiar blue-and-gray tights.

"The fact is that Batman's new costume is much closer to the original concept for the first film," Ringwood says. "It's more like armor now, rather than a muscle suit. We've also modified the mask by strengthening the eyebrows and the nose, and changing the shape of the eyes and chin." (Ignored by Ringwood is the fact that, before the feature films came along, the Caped Crusader was never in need of armor or a muscle suit.)

For the Penguin and Catwoman, Ringwood and Vogt had to fashion designs that were faithful to the popular concept of the characters while creating visual innovations that would newly personify them on film. (In other words, they fixed something that wasn't broken.)

"Tim is a very visual director who's involved with everything, including the costumes," declares Vogt. "As an artist, he's able to provide sketches of his basic idea, and gives you the freedom to take off from there."

To many fans, the Penguin is synonymous with umbrellas. In BATMAN RETURNS, he relies on six different bumbershoots, which serve equally ignoble functions: the Knife Umbrella, the Machine-Gun Umbrella, the Dazer (producing a hypnotic effect), the Flamethrower Umbrella, the Umbrella-Copter, and the Pied Piper (a multicolored carousel of twinkling lights and revolving toys, hiding a darker purpose).

Essentially, Catwoman depends on two low-tech weapons to defeat her foes: an old-fashioned bullwhip and her razor-like talons. She also packs a stun gun, taken from a defeated Red Triangle Circus Gang thug, for special situations.



"Originally, when I created BATMAN I had no idea it would become such an event," notes Bob Kane. "Batman just seems to hit a certain chord with people. It's not just fighting for justice against evil. It's the duality of Batman and the villains who confront him."

The Penguin, with his beaklike nose and elegant dress, first reared his distinctive head in late 1941. Bob Kane (according to the perennially self-publicizing Bob Kane) came up with the character from a source that placed him—or his lungs, at any rate—at great risk.

"I haven't smoked in 40 years," claims the cartoonist, "but at the time I did, like everybody in America I thought smoking was cool, so I smoked Kool cigarettes. If you remember, the Kool cigarette pack had a drawing of a penguin on it. So when I was trying to invent some villains for Batman to fight, I thought, 'Oh, my

*Continued on page 23*





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*The two lives of Catwoman: the mousy Selina Kyle (LEFT) and the tigerish Princess of Plunder (RIGHT), both played by Michelle Pfeiffer, who replaced Annette Bening in the role.*

gosh! This penguin looks kind of like a little fat man in a tuxedo. Why not have a villain called the Penguin?"

Like most of Kane's characters, the Penguin persona and modus operandi have evolved quite a bit since his invention, but in the beginning he was clearly a cold-blooded killer. (Then again, in those early days, Batman himself thought little of dispatching his opponents to the hereafter.) Later, the Penguin became more of a master crimesmith than a murderer, chastising Batman in overblown language and relying upon his astonishing array of trick umbrellas as weapons, tools, modes of transportation, and even communication devices.

Catwoman's history pre-dates that of the Penguin, Selina Kyle having made her comic-book debut in the mid-40s. As with other villains, Catwoman's personality has ebbed and flowed through the years, with one consistency: her love/hate relationship with Batman, a theme that's explored in *BATMAN RETURNS*.

The physical inspiration for Catwoman was a combination of the 1930s blonde bombshell Jean Harlow, the dark-haired 1940s screen siren Hedy Lamarr, and Bob Kane's girlfriend at that time. "I admired Hedy Lamarr," recalls Kane. "She had that great feline

beauty, and my girlfriend looked very much like her. My girlfriend was kind of handy as a seamstress, and she evolved a cat costume in which she posed as my model for the character."

Why a cat?

"Well, a cat has nine lives," Kane laughs. "So I figured that whenever she was caught, or wounded, she'd survive for another go-around with Batman. Also, I feel there's something very mysterious about cats, and I equate that with women."

The TV series that aired on ABC from January 1966 to March 1968 gave both the Penguin (Burgess Meredith) and Catwoman (Julie Newmar) extensive screen time. Kane is rather pleased that the campy days are long gone. "When I created Batman and the related characters, he was a dark, brooding vigilante. It all became campy and comedic in the 60s, with the advent of the TV show.

"Tim Burton is a wonderful director, and he brings a great visual atmosphere to his movies. He and I think alike, and Batman was depicted exactly the way I created him in the beginning. It's dark, it's textured, but it's also a lot of fun...and I like that."

Sean Farrell

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# Better Holmes and Watson

## The Granada Series Reviewed

**THE SPECKLED BAND**  
Adaptation: Jeremy Paul  
Direction: John Bruce

Holmesians, Sherlockians, and just plain mystery fans are all familiar with the plot details of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *THE SPECKLED BAND*, perhaps the best known of Sherlock Holmes stories. Miss Enid Stoner, whose devoted sister Violet has died under unfathomable circumstances, is advised by family friend Dr. John H. Watson to seek help from the world's first consulting detective. Two years later, she does so. At 221B Baker Street, we discover Holmes, aided by the faithful pageboy Billy, hard at work on several concurrent cases. One such case concerns Mr. Charles Augustus Milverton, the notorious blackmailer, who pays a call to the Master Sleuth's rooms. After Milverton departs, Miss Stoner tells Holmes of the dark events leading to sister Violet's death—events which may be repeating themselves—and the cruelties of the sisters' stepfather, Dr. Grimesby Rylott. The following day, Holmes (disguised as Rylott's new butler) and Billy (disguised as the butler's daughter) arrive at the scene of the crime and...uh...

Maybe you remember it differently?

\*\*\*

As most readers know it, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", which initially graced the February 1892 edition of *The Strand Magazine*, centers on the plight of Miss Helen Stoner, whose sister Julia has died under unfathomable circumstances. Miss Stoner has never met Dr. Watson before visiting Baker Street. Milverton is not in attendance; neither is Billy. Miss Stoner's cruel stepfather is named Roylott, not Rylott. Holmesians and Sherlockians share the secret behind this twice-told tale, as perhaps do a few just plain mystery fans, but the uninitiated might be interested to learn that Conan Doyle did indeed write "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" twice: first as the beloved *Strand* story and later—in 1910, in fact—as a three-act play. (Whenever the stage version is discussed, it is invariably stressed that Conan Doyle changed the name of his villain by dropping an "o" from Roylott, yet, considering the participation of Milverton, who is dragged in from another tale, and Billy, who is dragged in in drag, the errant vowel seems the least of the author's whimsies.)

Granada's *SPECKLED BAND* is based squarely on the story, not the play.



Jeremy Brett

Telescriber Jeremy Paul has fleshed out the plot, but, as usual with this writer, the additional action is taken directly from such hints as are provided by the text. Thus the prologue introduces the band of gypsies camped on Stoke Moran, the hereditary Roylott estate, and presents an example of Roylott's antagonistic relationship with the townsfolk. Sadly, Paul's commendable adherence to the Canon makes for something of an unengaging finale. Alone at night, Holmes and Watson await the slithering means by which Julia Stoner met her untimely end. Such scenes are a Conan Doyle specialty—the fog-shrouded watch for the spectral Hound of the Baskervilles is another case in point—but, consisting as they do of little more than silence and stillness, they are damnably difficult to dramatize. Here, the problem is magnified by the species expected—namely, a rope-climbing, milk-drinking, whistle-answering swamp adder from India. Simply put, no such creature exists. (For that matter, neither does the hellish hound—but it's easier to get a canine to perform than a reptile.)

If David Burke as Watson seems a tad more obtuse here, and a trifle preoccupied with food, Jeremy Brett is again on target as Holmes. *THE SPECKLED BAND* offers a Great Detective brimming with the milk of human kindness and concern. Holmes being Holmes, though, it also offers a Great Detective who all but revels in the dangers facing his client.

As Helen Stoner, Rosalyn Landor is the very model of a Victorian heroine, as is Denise Armon as the less fortunate Julia. Rosalie Williams again presides over her unorthodox household with admirable aplomb; no actress has ever done so much



ABOVE: Helen Stoner (Rosalyn Landor) shows Holmes (Jeremy Brett) and Watson (David Burke) the grounds of Stoke Moran while Dr. Roylott is in London. NEXT PAGE: Snakes alive! Sherlock Holmes confronts a deadly (and totally fictitious) swamp adder in *THE SPECKLED BAND*. Pictured: Jeremy Brett and Kevin.



to bring Mrs. Hudson to life. THE SPECKLED BAND is sparked by the presence of one of the Canon's best villains, and Jeremy Kemp doesn't disappoint as Dr. Grimesby Roylott. His sudden, explosive invasion of the Baker Street rooms is one of the episode's several highlights. (Another, quieter highlight is the train ride to Stoke Moran, in which Brett and Burke are posed to echo the original Sidney Paget illustration from *The Strand*.)

"You evidently saw more in those rooms than was visible to me, Holmes," says Watson following an examination of the bed chamber in which Julia Stoner faced a nameless doom.

"No," smiles Holmes, "but I probably deduced a little more. Do you remember Miss Stoner said that her sister could smell Dr. Roylott's cigar?"

"Well?"

"The ventilator! A ventilator made, a cord hung, and a woman who lies in the bed dies. Did you notice anything peculiar about the bed?"

"No."

"It was clamped to the floor. Could not be moved. Had to remain in the same relative position to the ventilator and the rope—for so we may call it, since it was clearly never made for a bell-pull."

"I begin to see dimly what you're driving at," exclaims Watson. "We're only just in time to prevent some subtle and horrible crime!"

Its flaws relatively minor, THE SPECKLED BAND is another entertain-



One of the best of the Canon's villains: Dr. Grimesby Roylott, as superbly played by Jeremy Kemp.

ing entry in THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. If swamp adders are not your cup of poison, it will probably ease your fears to learn that, according to an unidentified crew member quoted in Peter Haining's *The Television Sherlock*

Holmes (Virgin Books, 1991), the snake's name was Kevin—"after a director we all knew".

And there's another mystery to solve...

—Richard Valley



## NEWS

## BITE

On April 30, 1992, the Mystery Writers of America, Inc. announced the winners of the 1991 Edgar awards. Among those nominated were *Scarlet Street* interviewee Jeremy Paul for *THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE*. Mr. Paul's script for *THE CASE-BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* lost out to Michael Baker and David Renwick's dramatization of *THE LOST MINE* for *POIROT*. In 1988, Paul won the Edgar for his adaptation of *The Musgrave Ritual* for *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*.

Other winners this year include Ted Tally for the screenplay *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*; Peter Haining for the book *Agatha Christie: Murder in Four Acts*; and Kenneth Silverman for his critical biography *Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance*.

Margaret Norton won the Ellery Queen Award, and Harold Q. Masur won the Raven award. Elmore Leonard was Grandmaster.

—Jessie Lilley



## NEWS

## BITE

Great news from Dan Curtis Productions! A representative of MPI Video and Pomegranate Press informs us that the 1990 version of *DARK SHADOWS* starring Ben Cross, Jean Simmons, Jim Fyfe, Roy Thinnes, and the indispensible Barbara Steele, is being released on video. A September/October release of an expanded version of the two-hour pilot movie is planned. After that, the one-hour episodes will be released on a monthly basis, starting in February 1993.

Our source further states that a compilation tape (i.e., interviews, scariest moments, etc.) is being planned, with a tentative release date of December 1992. However, that has not been finalized. Another *DARK SHADOWS* release will be a book entitled *Dark Shadows Resurrected*, which should be in the stores in August or September of this year. Look for a review and further updates in your Fall '92 issue of *Scarlet Street*.

—Jessie Lilley

# BLUEBEARD

by Tom Weaver and Michael Brunas

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**A murderer is in your midst! A criminal who strangles young women! Any person having information concerning this Bluebeard, please communicate with the police at once!**

By 1943, PRC—Hollywood's most notorious bush-league studio—was eagerly laying out its strategy for expansion. "Big" pictures like *CORREGIDOR* and *ISLE OF FORGOTTEN SINS* were granted "top budgets" (by PRC standards, at any rate). PRC acquired the Fine Arts studio and filled it with newly purchased equipment, sets, and flats. A decision was made to place less reliance upon unit producers; the company would be producing films itself rather than allowing the ball to be carried by others. A contract roster would be built up for the first time in the organization's history. The three-legged dog of the movie industry was sitting up and begging to be noticed.

On October 7, 1943, PRC signed Edgar G. Ulmer to a long-term agreement, the veteran director recently having handled the company's "top-budget" musical *JIVE JUNCTION* as well as several other 1942/1943 PRC pictures. Vienna-born, a set designer and assistant director on the stage productions of Max Reinhardt, assistant to filmland giants such as F. W. Murnau, director/designer/co-writer of the horror classic *THE BLACK CAT* (1934), Ulmer's name brought a touch of class to his mini-budgeted productions. PRC had to have been proud of the newest addition to their regular roster, but the first assignment they handed him seemed to reflect little of that enthusiasm. Less than a week after Ulmer was signed, PRC loaned him to the R. Wolff Advertising Agency to direct short-subject musicals that would be given free of charge to the Army for showing overseas. All costs were assumed by Coca-Cola.

Better things lay ahead, though, and by Spring 1944 one of Ulmer's (and PRC's) most prestigious "B" films was in the works: *BLUEBEARD*. Charlie Chaplin had earlier announced that he would produce a film with that title, but it was PRC producer Martin Mooney and not the Little Tramp who was awarded title clearance in April. Mooney was quick to specify that the film would not be about Henri Landru, the real-life French lady-killer, but would center around a 19th-century Parisian artist who used his flowing cravat to strangle models. (Henri Désiré Landru was an accomplished swindler who claimed at least nine female victims between 1914 and 1919, when he was finally caught. Police sifted through the ashes of his stove and examined his outhouse and garden, finding hundreds of human bone fragments, teeth, and the

like; Landru so loved roses that, as the police dug around in his yard searching for bodies, his primary concern was for his flowers. People flocked to his sensational trial, with the well-mannered Landru volunteering, "If any lady would like my place, I will willingly surrender it." He maintained his innocence, but the evidence against him was overwhelming and the jury needed only 90 minutes to bring in a verdict of guilty. "Ah, well," he commented just before his February 23, 1922, guillotining, "it is not the first time that an innocent man has been condemned.")

On May 11, *BLUEBEARD*'s stars were set. For the title role of the deranged puppeteer/killer, John Carradine: like Ulmer, a Hollywood figure whose career ups and downs have practically become the stuff of legend. Jean Parker, a Montana-born beauty, formerly an MGM contractee (and, in the 50s, Mrs. Robert Lowery), was signed to play the female lead, Martin Mooney having been unable to secure the services of actress Marie McDonald from producer Hunt Stromberg. Teala Loring, Carradine's niece in Monogram's *RETURN OF THE APE MAN* (1944), was loaned to PRC by Paramount for the role of Jean Parker's sister; Patti McCarti, leading lady of PRC Westerns, would play one of Parker's girlfriends. Silent-screen heartthrob Nils Asther, character actors Ludwig Stossel, George Pembroke, and Henry Kolker; and "B"-movie buffoon Emmett Lynn rounded out the cast of the production, which began shooting on May 31.

\* \* \*

The film opens with police hauling the body of Bluebeard's latest victim from the dark waters of the Seine. All Paris is terrified, save for Lucille (Jean Parker), a poised and beautiful young woman who works in a modiste's shop. Leaving work with her friends Belette (Patti McCarti) and Constance (Carrie Devan), she encounters Gaston Morrell (John Carradine), a puppeteer who frequently puts on shows in the park. Morrell, obviously attracted to Lucille, promises to present a show the following night, mainly for Lucille's benefit.

The next night, after Morrell, Le Soldat (Emmett Lynn), and Renée (Sonia Sorel) have staged the puppet opera *FAUST*, Lucille visits Morrell backstage and admires the life-like marionettes:

Morrell: They're all likenesses of people I've known.



John CARRADINE

# BLUEBEARD

with  
Jean PARKER • Nils ASTHER  
Ludwig STOSSEL

Lucille: Mephistopheles, too?

Morrell: Yes, the Evil One, too. Among other things, he's also my business manager!

The puppet of Marguerite is the likeness of a girl who met a tragic end. Lucille discerns that, with the puppet, Morrell is deliberately keeping that tragedy alive. She suggests that he create a new puppet to make him think of someone else. Lucille offers to be the model for the new puppet, but when Morrell remembers that he will need to sketch and paint her first, he abruptly declines her offer, and tells Lucille to leave with Bette and Constance: "You'd better go with them. You'd better stay close to them. . . ."

Returning home, Morrell finds Renée waiting. The girl is obviously in love with Morrell, and has stood by as he's struck up relationships with other girls.

Renée: Gaston—these girls—I've known they didn't mean anything to you, really—because you always came back to me. But, Gaston, what's happened to them?

Renée has her answer when she realizes—too late—that Morrell is Bluebeard. Renée's body, carried down into the Paris sewers by Morrell, is later found bobbing in the river. Feigning innocence, Morrell visits the Surete Generale headquarters and

identifies her body as that of his missing employee. Inspector Lefevre (Nils Asther) thanks him for his cooperation.

Morrell sees Lucille again, this time telling her that he wants to put on a new puppet ballet and hiring her to create the costumes. Lucille notices the discarded cravat Morrell used to strangle Renée, slightly torn. Over his objection, she quickly puts a few stitches in the damaged cravat. "There we are, all fixed. Now you can use it again!" she beams.

Morrell's business manager, Jean Lamarte (Ludwig Stossel), knows that Morrell is Bluebeard and that the murdered girls were his models: Morrell is unable to paint a girl without killing her immediately afterward. To cover up for Morrell (and to line his own pockets), Lamarte, greedy and unscrupulous, then "fences" the portraits, lying to Morrell about the price he receives and giving him only a tiny fraction of his due. The portrait of Morrell's fourth victim has been sold to the Duke of Cadignac; Morrell is worried because he knows that the duke will publicly exhibit the painting, and the girl might be recognized.

Morrell's fears are confirmed and Inspector Lefevre is notified. The duke tells Lefevre that he bought the portrait from Lamarte, so Lefevre goes undercover, visiting Lamarte's shop and telling him he wishes to buy a canvas by the same artist. (Morrell uses the pseudonym "Albert Garron".) Lamarte is too cautious to fall into the inspector's trap. (No one explains why the police feel that the man who painted the girl's portrait must be her murderer.)

Lucille is visited by her younger sister, Surette operative Francine (Teala Loring), who is dressing behind a screen when Morrell stops by to pay Lucille a short visit. The girlfriend of Inspector Lefevre, Francine later visits him at headquarters, and hatches a plan of her own to ensnare the shipper Lamarte.

Detective Deschamps (Henry Kolker) and Francine visit Lamarte, presenting themselves as father and daughter; Deschamps wants Lamarte to hire "Garron" to paint a portrait of Francine. Lamarte is understandably wary, but Deschamps' offer of £150,000 sways the wily art dealer. Lamarte imposes on Morrell to paint the girl, but Morrell, sensing a trap, will accede only if the sitting takes place in the workroom over Lamarte's shop.

As Deschamps waits in the shop below, Morrell (hiding behind a screen and viewing Francine in a mirror) begins to sketch the girl. Francine tricks Morrell into stepping out where she can see him, and is instantly gripped by terror: the painter, Bluebeard, is her own sister's beau. His secret exposed, Morrell strangles the girl. Downstairs, Deschamps tries to signal a group of policemen stationed outside, but Lamarte clubs him into unconsciousness. Morrell catches Lamarte trying to make a getaway and, feeling that he has been betrayed, kills him, too. Bluebeard escapes through the sewers as police storm the house.

At Francine's wake, Lefevre shows Lucille the cravat that was used to garotte the girl; Lucille recognizes it as the one she repaired for Morrell. Confronted at his studio, Morrell explains (in flashback) that, as a starving young art student, he saw a girl, Jeanette (Anne Sterling), collapse in the street. Carrying her to his garret, he nursed her back to health and painted her portrait ("There was something in her fever-tormented eyes that was almost spiritual. . ."). The resultant portrait, titled "Maid of Orleans", was awarded a prize and hung in the Louvre. Eager to share this great news with Jeanette, who had in the meantime recovered and moved out, Morrell tracked her down and found that in real life his "spiritual" Jeanette was actually a prostitute, "a low, coarse, loathsome creature". Morrell, overtaken by madness, choked her to death.

Morrell: Every time I painted again, I painted Jeanette. So I turned to making puppets, because I could make them of wood. Because when they became Jeanette, I could take out my fury on them. I couldn't kill wood!

Lamarte had learned of Morrell's first murder and forced the artist to continue to paint girls so that he (Lamarte) could sell the canvases; every time, Morrell killed his model.

Morrell professes his love for the frightened Lucille but, involuntarily, he begins to choke her. Suddenly the police arrive; Lefevre had noticed Lucille's suspicious behavior when he showed her



**BLUEBEARD's two figures of fright: John Carradine (RIGHT) as a criminally insane puppeteer and Ludwig Stossel (LEFT) as—shudder!—his agent!**

the mended cravat, and followed her. Feverishly fighting off Lefevre's gendarmes, Morrell attempts a cross-rooftop escape, but the edge of a roof buckles and Bluebeard plummets into the Seine far below, joining his victims in their watery grave. (In the pressbook synopsis, he purposely jumps to his death.)

Although well-received when it was first released, BLUEBEARD remained a mostly overlooked film until the late 50s, when American film critics began to fall in with the French *auteur* crowd. Seemingly including only the staff of the influential French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinema*, these hard-core Gallic buffs felt that there was far more style and imagination in the average Hollywood "B" movie than was generally acknowledged. As this intellectual firestorm swept Stateside, directors such as Sam Fuller, Joseph H. Lewis, and Budd Boetticher were recognized as neglected artists worthy of full reappraisals. The big winner in the *auteur* sweepstakes, Edgar Ulmer emerged as a bona fide cult hero, largely on the basis of



**Bluebeard lines up three potential victims. LEFT to RIGHT: Carrie Devan, Patti McCart, Jean Parker, and John Carradine.**



John Carradine disposes of Ludwig Stossel in PRC's *BLUEBEARD* (1944). Stossel went on to become "that little old winemaker" in TV commercials.

DETOUR (1945), a film steeped in flashy technique (shadowy photography; doom laden, mock Raymond Chandler narration; and a roster of down-and-out characters). Strangely, while it became increasingly fashionable to canonize Ulmer and his fellow *auteurs*, critics found it necessary to thrash some of the more respected Hollywood directors. When, almost overnight, directors such as William Wyler, John Huston, and Billy Wilder found themselves being browbeaten by the same small clique of film academics, one sensed an intellectual conspiracy at work.

The *auteur* movement now seems a knee-jerk reaction to the cosmopolitan film critics (typified by the *New York Times*' resident stuffed-shirt, Bosley Crowther) who automatically gave a thumbs-down verdict to any genre movie or programmer-grade Hollywood product that passed their upturned noses.

Ulmer's *BLUEBEARD* is a benchmark example of style on a shoestring, although it's easy to be put off by the film's air of cheapness and artificiality. On an entertainment level, the picture seems as creaky as ever; but, overlooking the glaring shortcomings of physical production, viewers of *BLUEBEARD* can find consolation in Ulmer's wonderful eye for composition, which comes through even in the most perfunctory of scenes. For a Poverty Row quickie, the sheer number of camera set-ups is staggering, and one can only marvel at the grueling, breakneck pace that the director must have maintained throughout the shooting. *BLUEBEARD* gives credence to Ulmer's claim that he once made 80 set ups in one day. The payoff can be seen in the film's remarkable visual richness.

Of course, Eugen Schufftan, the film's uncredited director of photography, deserves his full share of praise here, too. The genius German cinematographer worked internationally, lending his talents to pictures as diverse as *METROPOLIS* (1926), Ulmer's *MENSCHEN AM SONNTAG* (1929), *IES YEUS SAN VISAGE*,

*Tom Weaver is a rabid film fan from North Tarrytown, NY, who writes for Midnight Marquee, Fangoria, and Starlog. He is the author of the upcoming Poverty Row Horrors (McFarland) and co-author of Universal Horrors. Michael Brunas is the co-author of Universal Horrors (McFarland) and has written for Starlog, Filmfax, and Midnight Marquee.*

a.k.a. *THE HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS* (1959), and the kiddie fantasy *CAPTAIN SINBAD* (1963); he landed an Oscar for his photography of 1961's *THE HUSTLER*. Two years after receiving the Billy Bitzer Award for "outstanding contribution to the motion picture industry", Schufftan died, in 1977.

Though there's no shortage of kudos for *BLUEBEARD* in film-history books, and *auteur*-minded critics are lavish in their praise, it's always been a film that audiences have a tough time warming up to. It's all well and good to salute Ulmer for the ingenious way he creates a soundstage Paris on a less-than-zero budget, but this doesn't bring an extra ounce of realism to the absurd painted backdrops and papier-maché sets; in fact, by overreaching, *BLUEBEARD* is more recognizably an ultra low-budget film than something as "drecky" as, say, *DEAD MEN WALK* (1943). Leo Erdody's wall-to-wall music, classically based, calls constant attention to itself, sometimes drowning out the dialogue. The script is talky, the marionette sequences uncomfortably long, the comedy relief painful. If you're in the market for a creatively-made low-budget psychological thriller, *BLUEBEARD* is perfect; but if you want to kick back for an hour of horror-film fun, *BLUEBEARD* can't shine *THE MAD MONSTER*'s shoes.

Some of the gaffes in *BLUEBEARD* are humorous; more humorous, in fact, than the "comic relief" of Emmett Lynn (as Carradine's leering "go-fer") and camera-conscious Iris Adrian (who stops the film dead as a smirky, Brooklyn accented Parisian prostitute). The dubbing of the supposedly "singing" actors (Carradine, Lynn, and Sonia Sorel) during the marionette scene is hilariously, embarrassingly poor. While painting Teala Loring, Carradine can see her in a mirror; unaccountably, she cannot see him. And Carradine's incriminating portrait of one of his early victims, which is a crucial plot point, looks as if it were executed by a television-art-school dropout. (Sharp-eyed viewers can catch sight of the very same painting decorating the wall of a beatnik café in the 1959 heist movie *THE REBEL SET*.) The climax of the film is marred by an odd slow-motion shot of Carradine's stunt double falling to his drowning death. (This footage would be used again a year later in PRC's *FOG ISLAND*.)

These reservations did little to impede the flow of favorable critical notices, quite rare for PRC penny-pinchers. No one was more impressed than the *Hollywood Reporter*, who called *BLUEBEARD*

... the kind of picture any company, or any producer, would like to release. It is a class product from start to finish, with every opportunity to entertain, regardless of expense, utilized to the fullest. . . . Though of the horror variety, [*BLUEBEARD*] raises this type of entertainment to a new high by combining an intelligent story with psychological overtones and a beautifully-mounted production. . . . Edgar Ulmer's direction is studied and exact. There is a gentleness and an understanding permeating the entire film that can be attributed to him. Jockey Feindel's photography is always good and, at times, superbly different

*BLUEBEARD* remains on solid ground with dyed-in-the-wool film buffs and Ulmer cultists, but it's a little difficult to imagine a casual viewer getting past PRC's rinky-dink production values and the picture's stodgy pace. As with most public-domain titles,

the plethora of poor dupe prints and low-quality videos gives the film an even dingier look. Under these conditions, BLUEBEARD's elevated standing may be in some jeopardy, and the film's atmosphere of failed artistic pretension seems to grow thicker with repeated viewings.

John Carradine plays the tormented Morrell to perfection; it's undoubtedly Carradine's finest hour in a horror film (and therefore his best-ever leading movie performance). He enacts the part sensitively and convincingly, and looks almost dashing in his finely tailored period clothes and long haircut; even at the end, when he pours out his heart to Jean Parker, it's with passion and dramatic intensity, rather than his accustomed ham. How is it possible that this is the same John Carradine who drooled up a storm in Monogram's VOODOO MAN, another 1944 release?

The *Hollywood Reporter* loved Carradine as Bluebeard, although not enough that they resisted the temptation to poke fun at his popular screen image:

Carradine has never been seen to better advantage. Gone are the familiar, hammish chin-stroking and the leering eye. He gives a sensitive yet virile portrayal of the mad painter that will be marked as one of the finest pieces of acting in a long time.

Oddly, Carradine never again worked with Ulmer, even though the pair appear to have gotten along well enough on BLUEBEARD (and, previously, on THE BLACK CAT and ISLE OF FORGOTTEN SINS). Later in 1944, PRC announced that Carradine would play the count in THE WIFE OF MONTE CRISTO, but that Ulmer production (re-released in 1946) ended up having Martin Kosleck in the role. Kosleck today shudders at the memory of the film, still appalled by the rock-bottom cheapness of the production and not at all impressed with Ulmer's much-vaunted back-against-the-wall ingenuity. Ulmer may have thrived on the experience of making movies for next to no money, but it did understandably little for the egos of the actors involved.

BLUEBEARD's co-stars are a professional and persuasive lot. Jean Parker fills the bill nicely as the demure Lucille; Parker seems to have specialized in horror pictures that year, also turning up in Universal's DEAD MAN'S EYES (1944) opposite Lon Chaney, Jr., as well as in the Pine-Thomas semi-horror spoof ONE BODY TOO MANY (1944) with Bela Lugosi (also filmed at PRC). Nils Asther, who plays the inspector, was a handsome silent-screen star who, despite being a fine actor, was unaccountably reduced to programmers soon after movies broke the sound barrier. He could always be counted on to bring a touch of exotic elegance to a film, which is precisely what he does for BLUEBEARD.

Further down the cast list, Ludwig Stossel, the frumpy, amiable father of Lou Gehrig (Gary Cooper) in THE PRIDE OF THE YANKEES (1942), and that Little Old Winemaker in 60s TV commercials, plays completely against type as the evil Lamarte. Made up and bizarrely lit to look like something out of a silent horror film, Stossel is a worse fiend than Carradine, remorselessly profiting from portraits that can only be painted at the cost of their subject's lives. George Pembroke has so little to do in the film, it would be easy not to spot him at all; Henry Kolker, the head of the French Police in Metro's MAD LOVE (1935), is here demoted to plain-clothes detective, and seems strikingly ill at ease. As the doomed Renée, Sonia Sorel, then currently "shacked up" with Carradine (the actor having left his wife Ardanelle to live with Sorel), gets an on-screen taste of what it's like to be "the woman spurned". Sorel later married Carradine and gave birth to sons Christopher, Keith, and Robert before the couple's lurid 1967 divorce.

*Perhaps the best-known variation on the Bluebeard story is 1947's MONSIEUR VERDOUX. Pictured is star, director, writer, and composer Charles Chaplin, looking natter than usual. Co-star Martha Raye stole the picture.*

Production of BLUEBEARD may have been prompted by the huge box-office success of 20th Century Fox's Jack the Ripper film THE LODGER, shot in 1943 and released in January, 1944 (shortly before PRC announced BLUEBEARD). Comparisons between the two are almost odious, THE LODGER being an impressive big-budget production



crowded with suspense and breathtaking gaslit sets while **BLUEBEARD**, small-scale and pedantic, looks like a photographed college stage show. Carradine (Bluebeard) and Laird Cregar (Jack the Ripper) both excelled in their leading roles, fighting to quell homicidal impulses initially brought on by the treachery of a whore, and both films were made with creativity and sincerity. But **BLUEBEARD** simply isn't in **THE LODGER'S** league.

Ulmer's yen to direct a film version of **BLUEBEARD** dated back at least as far as April 1934, when in the wake of **THE BLACK CAT** he was reportedly preparing an elaborate Universal production of **BLUEBEARD** with Boris Karloff pencilled in as star. Just over a week after this announcement, Ulmer and Universal came to a parting of the ways, with the Hollywood trades reporting that a salary dispute had come between director and studio.

Universal revived the project in 1935, announcing that scenarist Bayard Veiller had been signed to write an original story and screenplay. Although Karloff was to play Bluebeard in the film, its real villain was to have been a woman. According to *Hollywood Reporter*, producer David Diamond and Veiller sought a psychoanalytical treatment that would explain the wife murders in a logical if not sympathetic manner. The horror film was to have been a period piece (1870 France), avoiding both the actual Landru as well as another real-life Bluebeard, the 15th-century Gilles de Rais. Preparations dragged on; new writers (Rose Franken and William Brown Maloney) were brought in, the period setting was abandoned in favor of a contemporary milieu. Bela Lugosi was slated to co-star with Karloff, and the film was finally given a January 1936, start date. Of course, in 1936 horror films went out of style, and **BLUEBEARD** (along with **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**, **THE ELECTRIC MAN**, and other thrillers planned by Universal) went down the tubes.

Despite having to squeeze every dollar, Ulmer does one of his best jobs on **BLUEBEARD**, but the entire film is tainted by its poverty-stricken look, and Pierre Gendron's intelligent but garrulous script cries out for pruning and



## BLUEBEARD

### Credits

PRC. Released November 11, 1944. Associate Producer: Martin Mooney. Produced by Leon Fromkess. Director: Edgar G. Ulmer. Screenplay: Pierre Gendron. Original story: Arnold Phillips and Werner H. Furst. Director of Photography: Eugen Schufftan.\* Operating Cameraman: Jockey A Feindel, A.S.C. Musical score composed and conducted by Leo Erdody. Supervising Film Editor: Carl Pierson. Production Manager: C. A. Beute. Assistant Director: Raoul E. Pagel. Art Director: Paul Palmentola. Assistant Art Director: Angelo Scibetta. Set Decorator: Glenn P. Thompson. Sound Engineer: John Carter. Master of Properties: Charles Stevens. Wardrobe: James H. Wade. Coiffures: Loretta Francel. Makeup: Milburn Moranti. Marionettes: Barlow & Baker. Running time: 71 minutes.

\*Because Schufftan was never able to break into the cameramen's union, screen credit for director of photography went to operating cameraman Jockey Feindel. Schufftan was credited as production designer.

### Cast

John Carradine (Gaston Morrell), Jean Parker (Lucille), Nils Asther (Inspector Jacques Lefevre), Ludwig Stossel (Jean Lamarte), George Pembroke (Inspector Renard), Teala Loring (Francine), Sonia Sorel (Renée), Henry Kolker (Deschamps), Emmett Lynn (Le Soldat), Iris Adrian (Mimi), Patti McCarti (Bebette), Carrie Devan (Constance), Anne Sterling (Jeanette).

doctoring. **BLUEBEARD** remains one of Poverty Row's most celebrated diamonds in the rough, a stellar example of brilliance on a miniscule budget, but this dark, moody sleeper has never made much of a splash outside of film encyclopedias. As noted, the film has fallen into the public domain, but video cassettes and TV airings are remarkably scarce; artistically bankrupt pictures like **THE APE MAN**, also public domain, continue to get more exposure. Sincere, imaginative, and artistic, **BLUEBEARD** is also murky, heavy-handed, and more than occasionally dull. In the classroom of vintage horror films, **BLUEBEARD** is the over-achiever, the teacher's pet, the "brown-noser" that everyone tends to keep at arm's length.

The Edgar Ulmer "mystique" and his cult director status can be a bit bewildering, but there's no denying that the man had a fascinatingly eclectic career, rubbing elbows with the cinema's greatest pioneers and then plummeting to the level of grade-Z Westerns, Ukrainian and Yiddish films (shot in New York and New Jersey), and documentary shorts about tuberculosis among blacks; rumor has it he even directed the early 60s nudist film **NAKED VENUS**. In fact, even as the French were lauding him in the late 50s, Ulmer was busily putting the lie to their hyperbolic praise with his lackluster handling of the horror and science-fiction bombs **DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL** (1957), **BEYOND THE TIME BARRIER** (1960), and **THE AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN** (1960), pictures so indifferently made that they could have been directed by any of Ulmer's Poverty

*George Sanders starred in **BLUEBEARD'S TEN HONEYMOONS** (1960). Can't blame him for having such a murderous attitude toward women—after all, he did marry Zsa Zsa Gabor!*

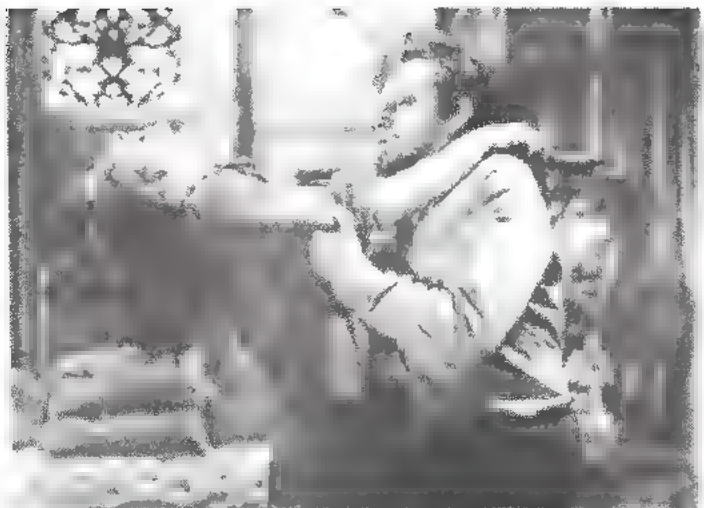
Row compatriots with no discernible difference. It's unfair, though, to blame Ulmer for the way the *auteur* clique has blown his reputation out of proportion; the director didn't hesitate to admit that he brought more of "himself" (his style, his "vision", whatever) to some pictures than to others. One of filmland's most colorful characters, Ulmer died at the Motion Picture Country Home after a long illness in 1972, at age 68.

PRC was at first unhappy with BLUEBEARD, but it eventually made money for the company (probably playing in a far wider assortment of theaters than the usual PRC drive-in). Most of BLUEBEARD'S contemporary reviews flattered the film, and even today it continues to garner complimentary notices. *Fangoria's* resident video reviewer Dr. Cyclops played it safe by straddling the fence a bit:

Made in between Ulmer's two best remembered films, THE BLACK CAT and DETOUR, BLUEBEARD doesn't measure up to those two underground classics, but it still has more style than most "B" horror programmers from the 40s. There's not much that is surprising in BLUEBEARD, but the movie has an interesting dark look and mood, and, after a fairly dull first half, moves along quite well. A good bet for B-movie connoisseurs.

Leslie Hall, well did the same thing, summing BLUEBEARD up as "possibly the most interesting film ever to come from PRC (which isn't saying very much)". John Cocchi (*Second Feature: The Best of the "B" Films*) was pretty noncommittal, too. "After DETOUR, this is considered to be PRC's best effort", he wrote, nicely distancing himself from the statement. *Psychotronic* skirted the issue of quality entirely, calling it "a popular B-film from the director of THE MAN FROM PLANET X".

Others were more opinionated. Leonard Maltin gave it three stars and described it as "surprisingly effective". Don Willis laid it on the line, as usual ("overrated 'sleeper', but decent enough"), as did Don Leifert, who complained in *Filmfax*, "The praise heaped upon this mediocre programmer remains a mystery to this author. Carradine's low-key approach to the title role is forgettable, and



© 1972 Cinema Releasing

Richard Burton was BLUEBEARD in a 1972 "all star" fiasco. Here, he murders Marilu Tolo. (What—Tolo, too?)

Ulmer's direction, aside from a few inventive camera angles, is nothing special. Simply put, BLUEBEARD is an overrated disappointment". A third Don, *B Movies'* Don Miller, seemed genuinely taken with it: "John Carradine gave what remains as one of his best, if not his absolute best, performance. His restraint under conditions that would tempt a Lugosi to overplay was remarkable, and he used his deep, rich voice, one of the best in films, to its fullest advantage. Edgar Ulmer came through with an excellent job of direction, like Carradine's performance restrained and expertly conceived." Peter Bogdanovich said during an interview with Ulmer that it was one of his best pictures but, of course, Ulmer was sitting right there. Gregory Mank (*The Hollywood Hissables*) wrote, "Carradine's exquisite performance... with Ulmer's unique touch, transforms a low-budget melodrama into a moving tragedy".



## NEWS

A couple of months ago the *Hollywood Reporter* ran a news item stating that Dan Curtis and New Line Cinema were getting together on a theatrical release of DARK SHADOWS. Recently, *Fangoria* ran the same story.

Recently, this writer spoke with a representative of Dan Curtis Productions, who says, "Not so. New Line has not contacted Curtis' offices, and it's news to me." *Fangoria* picked up on the item, and, sadly, they didn't confirm their information. Our contact mentioned that he may request a retraction from *Fangoria*.

We also contacted New Line Cinema and spoke with the Acquisitions Department, as well as Development and Distribution. Comments? "Never heard of it."

So, sorry, SHADOWS fans, but not this time.

—Jessie Lilley

\*\*\*

Michael Keaton, star of Warner Bros.' current BATMAN RETURNS, left his handprints and footprints in the concrete forecourt of the landmark Mann's Chinese

## BITE

Theater at 6925 Hollywood Boulevard on June 15, 1992, at 12 noon. Keaton's prints will join those of 179 of Hollywood's brightest luminaries, who have been creating these historic and enduring souvenirs since the Chinese Theater's early days. The first was Norma Talmadge, who accidentally stepped in wet cement outside the theater in 1929, thus creating a tradition that has grown to include such legends as Clark Gable, John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Clint Eastwood, and proving that Hollywood fame is measured entirely by what one steps in.

Keaton previously portrayed the Dark Knight in Warner Bros.' first Batman adventure, which became one of the highest-grossing motion pictures in history.

The actor has also appeared in NIGHT SHIFT (1982), MR. MOM (1983), JOHNNY DANGEROUSLY (1984), BEETLEJUICE (1988), CLEAN AND SOBER (1988), and PACIFIC HEIGHTS (1990).

—Drew Sullivan

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# the NEWS HOUND



The Hound interrupts his summer siesta with the Houndess to once again put paw to paper and bring news of another suspenseful season of entertainment. . . .

Start camping out now at the local multiplex for these August feature-film releases: **SINGLE WHITE FEMALE** concerns a woman who advertises for a roommate and gets a raft of trouble instead. Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh star. . . . Jim Belushi and Lorraine Bracco make fireworks in Florida in the erotic thriller **TRACES OF RED**. . . . Also due in August are **WHISPERS IN THE DARK** (formerly **SESSIONS**) with Annabella Sciorra, **JENNIFER EIGHT** starring Andy Garcia and John Malkovich, sequels **PET SEMATARY II** and **HELLRAISER III**, and the long-awaited prequel **TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME**.

Some tongue-in-cheek horrors will soon be on view: **WILDER NAPALM** stars Dennis Quaid and Debra Winger as members of a feuding family with pyrokinetic powers. . . . Ghosts of silent-screen legends help a young director solve a murder in **FOREVER**, starring Diane Ladd, Sally Kirkland, and Catwoman-wannabe Sean Young. . . . A Yankee visitor to Ireland tricks a leprechaun (much uglier than the "Lucky Charms" guy) out of his pot of gold in Trimark's **LEPRECHAUN**. . . . Another vacationer discovers a 600-year-old vampire ("Grampa" Al Lewis) in **MOONRISE**. . . . Inner-city teens fight a plague of blood-drinking mutated insects in **TICKS**, from director Tony Randel (**HELLRAISER II**). . . . In Joe Dante's **MATINEE**, a 1962 teenager (**EERIE**, **INDIANA**'s Omri Katz) comes to grips with "fallout shelters, heavy petting, giant mutant ants, and the end of civilization as we know it". John Goodman and Cathy Moriarty will be on hand to share the fate.

**SON OF THE PINK PANTHER** has begun its globe-trotting \$25-million production with Italian comedy star Roberto Benigni as Inspector Clouseau. . . . Roll-

ing in August are two Roger Corman productions: Bram Stoker's **BURIAL OF THE RATS** and the Universal release **DRACULA RISING**. . . . Starting production in January are the \$40-million **SUPERMAN: THE NEW MOVIE** and (finally) the Warner Bros. film of Andrew Lloyd Webber's **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** with Michael Crawford.

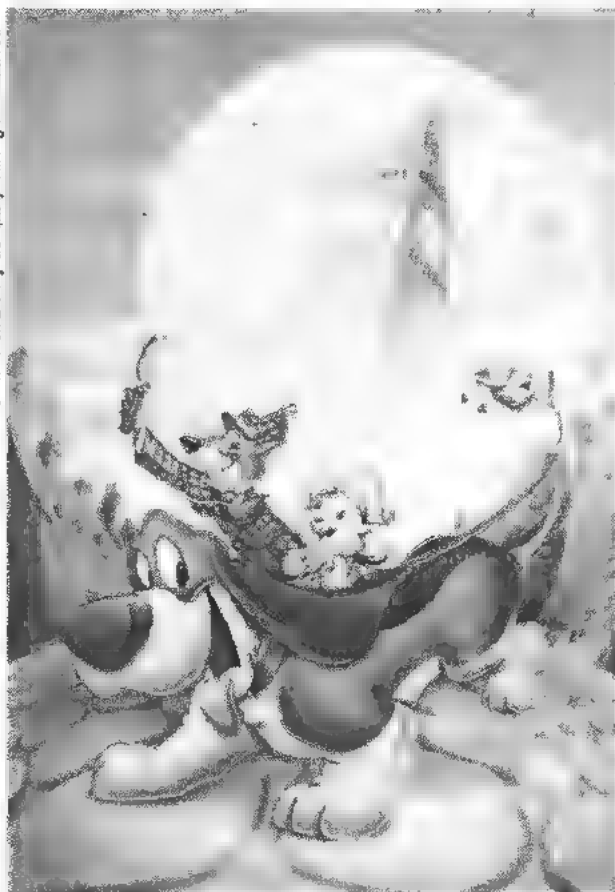
**OF THE DAMNED**. . . . Anthony Perkins, Amanda Donohoe, and Oliver Reed star in Ken Russell's **THE MUMMY LIVES**, which Russell will follow with **I AM YOUR NIGHTMARE**, starring Mister Nightmare himself, Robert Englund. . . . Producer Robert Evans is developing Lee Falk's comic-strip hero the Phantom for Paramount. Also announced for 1993

release at Paramount are **THE SAINT**, **ADDAMS FAMILY II**, and **NAKED GUN 33 1/3**. . . . Effects master Kevin Yagher is planning a directorial project, **THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW**. . . . Rick Baker, fresh from designing the dinosaurs for Spielberg's **JURASSIC PARK**, teams with director John Carpenter for a new Universal production of **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**.

Stephen King, who is suing New Line Cinema over their version of **THE LAWNMOWER MAN**, is nevertheless happy to sell his stories to prospective producers. Laurel Entertainment, who already own the unproduced *Thinner* and *The Stand*, have optioned the *Four Past Midnight* novella "The Langoliers". Rob Reiner's Castle Rock Entertainment, big winners with **MISERY** and **STAND BY ME**, have purchased the rights to the story "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption", and ABC, hoping to outdo their ratings from last year's **IT**!, is producing another four-hour miniseries for the fall, based on King's *The Tommyknockers*.

Jaclyn Smith stars in **KINDRED SPIRITS**, playing a lawyer turned-private-eye who gets some unsolicited help from the ghost of the detective who occupied her office 50 years ago. Corbin Bernsen also stars in the NBC feature. . . . Viewers will be all shook up over NBC's "ghostly docudrama" about Elvis Presley, **DARK MUSIC**, in which the King returns to tell his own "untold story". Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the afterlife.

Returning to the small screen with new, hour-long episodes is Arts & Entertainment's **AGATHA CHRISTIE MYSTERIES**, airing on the cable service on



*The malignant spirit of Rattigan, voiced by the legendary Vincent Price, hovers over THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE and friends.*

Down the road a piece are these projects developing in the Hollywood hopper: Novelist Anne Rice has completed a script for the Geffen/Warner Bros. production of **INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE** (hopefully with the lead characters' genders intact). Also optioned by Geffen are Rice's **WITCHING HOUR**, **THE VAMPIRE LESTAT**, and **QUEEN**

Sunday evenings at 10PM EST, beginning September 13th. Viewers beware: A&E edits most of its programming. Also back this summer on A&E with new episodes: LOVEJOY, starring Ian McShane.

Making their debut this television season: LIKELY SUSPECTS, a half-hour detective drama starring Sam McMurray, in which viewers at home help solve the mysteries. The Fox series airs 9:30PM EST on Friday nights. BAKER STREET is a London-based Family Channel sitcom about a Yankee couple who inherit Holmes' rooms at 221B (and the fun's afoot, presumably). . . ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK? Find out this summer, when Nickelodeon begins its young-adult horror/suspense anthology series. . . THE ADDAMS FAMILY returns to ABC on Saturday mornings this fall in a new creepy cartoon incarnation.

The good news: INSPECTOR MORSE will return in 1993 with three new two-parters. The bad news: they will most likely be the last. As reported in the trades, England's Central TV execs say star John Thaw "has decided that the possibilities for the Morse character are coming to an end". A pity The Hound raises a glass of real ale to the creators of a top-notch production.

Entertaining titles await home-video fanatics this summer: already on the racks are Disney's THE GREAT MOUSE DE-

TECTIVE at an attractive \$25 price, THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE starring risky baby-sitter Rebecca DeMornay, and CAROLINE?—the best made-for-TV mystery in ages—starring Stephanie Zimbalist as an heiress who seemingly returns from the grave. Other titles coming in July include the great two-hour pilot for the CBS series THE FLASH, the unreleased 1990 Cannon feature CAPTAIN AMERICA, and Steven Spielberg's HOOK at a "sell-through" price of \$25. July also brings a batch of Warner thrillers at a low \$19.95. Among the 35 titles are the TWIN PEAKS pilot, BLUE VELVET, DEAD CALM, PRESUMED INNOCENT, and six Hitchcock titles.

August sees the video release of the made-for-cable production of Kingsley Amis's THE GREEN MAN, starring Albert Finney. Also, Warner gives us an early Halloween present when they reduce 53 horror movie titles to \$19.95 each. Included are stop-motion favorites THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS, THE VALLEY OF GWANGI, and WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH. Hammer Film fans will be especially elated by the new releases of FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE, and TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA.

Count Dracula is terrifying on tape, but he's even more undead live. The

American Repertory Ballet Company is touring with DRACULA: THE BALLET, an outstanding dance adaptation of the Stoker novel. The company uses an evocative assortment of classical pieces, and often startling choreography, lights, and scenic design, to create a very unique entertainment. Scarlet Streeters in the Northeast can see the ballet this Halloween (October 30 and 31, 1992) at the State Theater of New Brunswick, N. J. The phone number for ticket information is (908) 246-7469.

The Hound, in closing, bids farewell to Mae Clarke, Robert Morley, and Marlene Dietrich, and thanks them for their contributions to the movies we all treasure.

Sincerely,

 **The News  
Hound**

P.S. The Hound would like to report on events occurring in your area that would be of interest to our readers. Listings of repertory cinemas, special screenings and seminars, live theatre, and fan gatherings are especially welcome. Send press releases (several months in advance) to The News Hound, c/o Scarlet Street, P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.

Research assistance provided by Kevin G. Shinnick.

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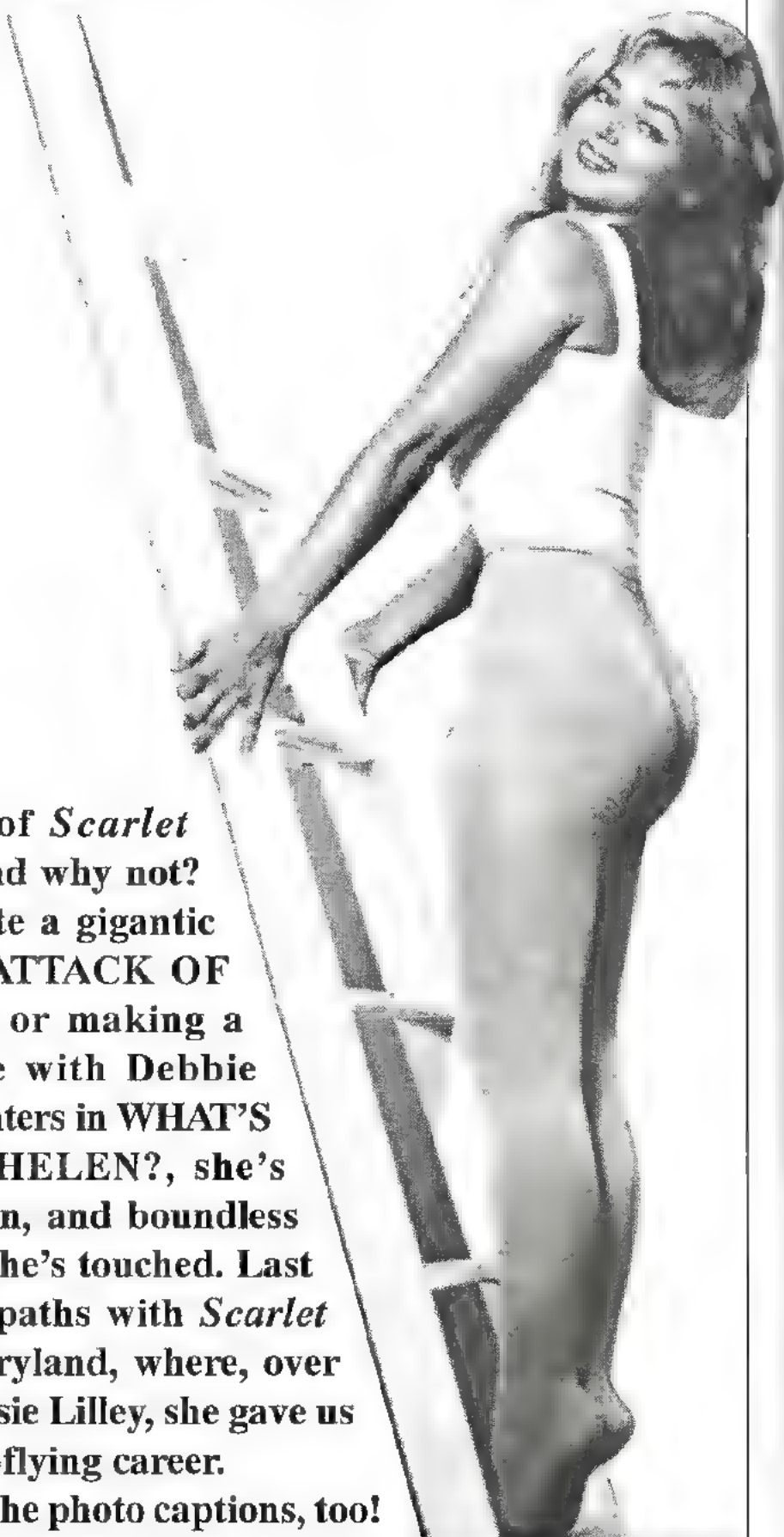
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# Our Dinner with Yvette

interview by  
**Jessie Lilley**

**Yvette Vickers is one of *Scarlet Street*'s all-time faves, and why not? Whether playing opposite a gigantic papier maché hand in *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*, or making a memorable appearance with Debbie Reynolds and Shelley Winters in *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?*, she's brought talent, dedication, and boundless sex appeal to every role she's touched. Last summer, Yvette crossed paths with *Scarlet Street* at Fanex 5 in Maryland, where, over dinner with publisher Jessie Lilley, she gave us the lowdown on her high-flying career. P.S. Yvette wrote some of the photo captions, too!**



**Scarlet Street:** You mentioned earlier that we must see *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN* on the big screen.

**Yvette Vickers:** Yes, I think you see more detail, and also the expressions of the actors seem to carry a little more weight. There's more intensity to the whole experience when you see a movie on a big screen. Like all of us, I've watched a lot of VCR, and it's just not the same.

**SS:** Why don't you tell us where you were born and how you first became interested in acting.

**YV:** I grew up in Malibu; I was brought there when I was six months old. I know this is bizarre, but my mother was kind of a wild lady and had a fight with her in-laws, and split. My grandfather threw me against the wall—that's why I'm crazy; I got bumped on the head (Laughs)—and she just picked me up and left to join her sister in California. The rest is history. We found a place in Malibu.

**SS:** You're into singing now. Which came first, singing or acting?

**YV:** Well, because my parents are musicians, I think I would have to say singing. I actually performed as a kid with them at different places—clubs, high-school auditoriums, just everywhere. I did a lot of hospital benefit work. I was seriously interested in joining Martha Graham's company when I was a child, and I found a woman who was from her group, and became a protégée of hers. Then I got off into acting and that took my heart.

**SS:** How did that start?

**YV:** Well, I was an English Major at UCLA. I needed three units of Social Sciences and they said that acting would qualify. I took it and I just went bananas, you know? I was very young; I was about 16; I was always ahead of my schedule—well, not in California, maybe, but according to most people. My father would take me to clubs when I was 10 years old. Nobody said a word, because he was playing the saxophone there and the owner knew him. They didn't have drinks and there was no reason to bar me, so I was around all these places, around grown-ups, all my life.

**SS:** You fell in love with acting at UCLA?

**YV:** I began acting at UCLA, where I played the Norma Shearer part in *IDIOT'S DELIGHT*. I wanted to be like that character. She used a cigarette holder, and I used to go around like that as a teenager, with a cigarette holder and low-cut dress and behaving like this woman of the world. Everybody liked it, and the professor said, "You're very good; you're very talented." I said, "Oh! Well, that's what I want to do!" Everything was falling into place.

**SS:** You went to UCLA to study writing. Have you done any writing at all?

**Jessie Lilley** is the publisher of *Scarlet Street*. She is a former actress and producer in regional theatre.



Photos on this and previous page courtesy of Yvette Vickers

**ABOVE:** "Another juvenile delinquent role: the lead in a *DRAGNET* segment. Jack Webb liked my work a lot, so I was hired for three *DRAGNET* episodes, two episodes of *PETE KELLEY'S BLUES*, and one *EMERGENCY*." **PREVIOUS PAGE:** "This is the 'Bardot' period: an MGM studio portrait during the filming of *ONE STEP BEYOND*. For me, this became standard procedure. Before or after the shooting of the actual production, I agreed to do publicity photos for the studio. However, I remained a freelance actress (believing I would get that 'magic lucky' movie any day)!"

**YV:** I have stacks and stacks of stories, notes, thoughts, poems, and two projects that are almost realized. One is the life of Zelda Fitzgerald, which I want to do as a one-woman show. The other is a Hollywood love story about the relationship I had with Jim Hutton, which lasted for quite a long time.

**SS:** How did your first professional acting job come about?

**YV:** I went to A Player's Ring, a little theatre in West Hollywood. There were a lot of wonderful people there, like Beverly Garland and Kathleen Freeman; it was a great environment in which to learn. They were doing a show for the military at Edwards Airforce Base, and I walked in and auditioned. I did the show, dancing with a sword dancer, and they thought I

was good. They said, "Do you want to do a musical with us? We're doing a play called *RING AROUND THE RING*." And the next thing I knew I was working in that theatre constantly. I was doing show after show, and that's when people saw me and started hiring me for TV work. That's how I got the White Rain commercial; someone saw me there.

**SS:** Did a commercial lead to your being hired by James Cagney for *SHORT CUT TO HELL*?

**YV:** No, that came in a very different way. I was doing Cherie in *BUS STOP* on the stage. The agent who signed me saw me there and said, "You'd be perfect for a movie James Cagney is directing at Paramount." They wanted me to do another scene for the producer. I did, and then I



**LEFT:** "This still was shot between takes on the set of the *ONE STEP BEYOND* episode *THE AERIALIST* with Mike Connors". **BELOW:** "This is the Paramount publicity release on this still from *SHORT CUT TO HELL*, directed by James Cagney: 'Tense moment—Yvette Vickers portrays a playgirl and Robert Ivers a killer in Paramount's *SHORT CUT TO HELL*. It's Ivers' first starring role. Yvette Vickers is rated one of the best new dramatic actresses.'"

Mike Connors called *NAKED IN EDEN*. We closed on a Friday night; we were all celebrating; it was, "Well, I don't have to see your face anymore"—kidding, of course. Well, Monday morning I had a job; my agent had set me up to do a TV show called *ONE STEP BEYOND*. I showed up, got in make-up, I walked in and there was Mike Connors—my leading man!

**SS:** You appeared in *RE FORM SCHOOL GIRL* for American International. Did you like working for AIP?

**YV:** Oh, yeah, they were nice. Sam Arkoff and Jim Nicholson. They were very sweet; I remember the experience as being very positive.

I didn't get to know them that well, but they were very professional and treated everybody well.

**SS:** Who was the director of that film?

**YV:** Edward Bernds.

**SS:** How did you get cast as Honey in *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*?

**YV:** That was the agency. I think it was mainly because of Allison Hayes; they wanted her for the 50-foot woman. I was with that office and they put a package together. It was a fairly simple negotiation. The guy called and said, "Do you want to do it?" And I said, "Sure."

**SS:** It was a Woolner Brothers production. Did they sell it to Allied Artists?

**YV:** I wasn't aware of the negotiating. At that time, I wanted to work; I wanted to be creative. I learned my lines, I showed up on time, I hit my marks, I gave my best, and I hardly knew anything about the business. And that was kind of a fault. I didn't take charge, and I didn't understand the politics of things.

**SS:** You played one scene opposite a huge prop hand. What was it made of?

**YV:** I think it was just what it looks like: papier maché and plaster.

**SS:** What was your attitude on that film? Did you feel it was too ridiculous to be taken seriously?

**YV:** No, I took it very seriously.

**SS:** You always give excellent performances, but was there any joking around on the set?

**YV:** Well, that stuff is shot mostly when you're not there, and I hardly remember that hand. People say, "Well, it came in the bar, you know?" But we were working so fast; there was never any sitting down and waiting for a shot. Everything was just click, click, click. I remember the hand coming in and my being frightened and all that, but I didn't examine it and say, "Does that look real?" I never, until recently, thought about special effects. I thought, "Is my character believable? Is it somebody that people will watch and think, 'That's a real person?'"

**SS:** That scene in the car with William Hudson, when you talk him into going back to kill his wife, is very good.



Photos on this page courtesy of Yvette Vickers

had my interview with Mr. Cagney and he signed me up.

**SS:** The Yvette Vickers image—one would say you were typecast as the bad girl, the vamp. How did that come about?

**YV:** Well, I loved Bette Davis—*JEZEBEL*, you know, and *OF HUMAN BONDAGE*. I loved that; I thought it was really exciting to see that kind of woman on screen. I had been doing musical comedies, but somehow my image in Hollywood became that of a femme fatale, a difficult, rebellious girl. When I was interviewed, people would always say "Controversial Yvette." And I'd say, "Am I really?" (Laughs) They thought of me that way. I guess, having my personality, they thought I was this vampy trampy person.

**SS:** Tell us something about your television experiences. Was *DARK OF THE MOON* live TV?

**YV:** Yes, on *MATINEE THEATRE*. I had done that part on stage and Albert McCleery, who did *MATINEE THEATRE*, asked me to do it. I became friends with Tom Tryon, who played the witch boy in that, and it was wonderful. It put you on edge when you were live. It became more exciting for everybody, because you couldn't goof and, if you did, everybody saw it. Even then, it was kind of fun for the audience, because they would see things like somebody changing their pants behind the scrim! We, fortunately, went sailing through. We didn't have any trouble, and I loved doing it.

**SS:** You played on *ONE STEP BEYOND*...

**YV:** I'd just finished doing a play with



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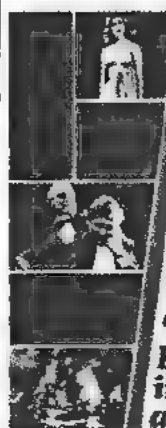
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The trouble with Harry Archer is that he has a sex-kitten mistress named Honey Parker holed up in the town hotel, and a big, angry wife at home. Pictured: William Hudson and Yvette in *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN* (1958).

YV: Thank you.

SS: You persuade him to go back to the house to give her the hypodermic.

YV: Yeah, my Lady Macbeth scene! (Laughs) I love high drama; in fact, I love Shakespeare and I've played Rosalind in *AS YOU LIKE IT*. I've always been a bit of a character actress, you know? A lot of people ask, "Well, why so many bad girls?" Any actress will tell you: they're more fun to do!

SS: The good girls, who notices them?

YV: The tough rebel girls are very interesting, as long as there's some way to let the audience know how they got that way. That's the thing that was missing

from *50 FT. WOMAN*. In *ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES* you get more of it, in the scene where she explains how she's had some hard knocks.

SS: In *50 FT. WOMAN*, when Allison Hayes trashes the bar in search of her husband, Harry, everything is coming down around you...

YV: I almost had two nails in my head! After the table fell and the ceiling came down, a stage hand came up and said, "Don't move." I looked at him, and there was a board with two nails sticking out, and they moved it away. I was just lucky that I didn't get hit—or, rather—nailed. (Laughs)

SS: You made very few horror films, but everyone knows you from them.

YV: My friend Skippy and I went to Lana Turner's hairdresser one day. It was so marvelous; there were two

people from New York and they said, "Oh! Yvette Vickers! We just saw your movie in New York City; it's playing at this special house where they play sci-fi and horror films."

SS: It must be the Film Forum in Greenwich Village.

YV: Yeah! Skippy was so impressed; he said, "Gee, you walk in the door and people are all la la la!" He had no idea. A lot of people in Hollywood don't know what anybody cares about me. (Laughs)

SS: We saw *GIANT LEECHES* last year when they ran it at the Film Forum. They had an American International tribute.

YV: It's funny; I sort of fell away from all

that contact. I'm not very good at connecting and keeping up and calling...

SS: What they call networking today?

YV: Yeah. I'm okay with business calls, where I have an obligation and I've told someone I'm going to call them, but socially, I've always had difficulty with that. I got into terrible trouble because of it. In the 60s, when I was working a lot and had no time to keep in touch with people, there was a fellow who came into my life and kind of took it over. He probably should have become my manager; he was very good. When I was through shooting, he'd say, "Okay, you're meeting some people at the Polo Lounge for drinks, and we're having dinner here," and la di da. As I say, it should have stayed a professional relationship, but somehow it became more of a romantic interest and I ended up marrying him. Which was a disaster! It was the only time I had what you would call a social secretary, and since that time I've never been really good at it. I did try with Michael Landon, who I met during that period. I knew Robert Conrad, Corey Allen, Nick Adams, Lee Marvin—for a while we were in touch, in the 60s and early 70s. Then, after Jim's death in '78—Jim Hutton—I kind of lost touch with everybody, and that's why I moved to Palm Springs. I left town for about three years. I just couldn't—I was having a difficult time handling that loss—so I just went away and tried to get myself together.

SS: Both *50 FT. WOMAN* and *GIANT LEECHES* were shot in a very short time. Usually, under those circumstances, a director doesn't work with the actors too extensively. Yet, in those films, your character is well fleshed out. Was it you or the director...

YV: There were two extremely different approaches. With *50 FT. WOMAN*, Nathan Juran, the director, hardly touched us. He just shot and let us do whatever we



LEFT: A big hand for the little lady! Yvette is about to meet her doom in this "hand-some" production still from *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*. RIGHT: Yvette tables a discussion on marital infidelity in 1958's *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*. Soon after, the title character tables Yvette!

did. Now, Bernie Kowalski on LEECHES, he liked to rehearse you and talk to you. They both were good, you know? There isn't really one approach; it depends on the person and the way they want to work. I'm pretty flexible that way. I've done both of them and found them fine.

**SS:** What do you think of Roger Corman as a director?

**YV:** I never worked with Roger Corman.

**SS:** Didn't he direct *I, MOBSTER*?

**YV:** Oh! I forgot it! (Laughs) That's awful! Maybe that's why he never hired me again.

**SS:** What do you remember about Corman?

**YV:** I liked him, you know? He's a reserved person, and in my heart of hearts, I am, too. I'm a Virgo; I have a need for privacy. My dog is named Greta Garbo. I think Roger is a very private person, and obviously very gifted and very smart. He's always been very nice to me.

**SS:** How did you get the part in *GIANT LEECHES*?

**YV:** Bernie Kowalski had seen my work. He called the agency and said he would like me to do the part. I think the Corman's were involved in that, too; they chose me for that—Gene Corman, particularly, since he was producing it. I really liked Gene a lot. He cared about the actors. For instance, those scenes where we were in the water, and it was cold and we were shivering; he had blankets and brandy. He took great care of us, but he caught pneumonia! He did. Serious pneumonia. He was lucky to recover, but he took care of us.

**SS:** Were the underwater scenes shot in a studio tank?

**YV:** No, that was in a swimming pool. That's the only thing that they didn't shoot at the arboretum in Pasadena.

**SS:** In that film, you don't have much contact with the hero and heroine, played by Ken Clark and Jan Shepard. All your scenes are with Bruno Ve Sota and Michael Emmet. The most interesting thing about the film is the subplot involving the three of you. After your character fades from the scene, the movie just dies.

**YV:** Oh, my! Oh, I love that compliment! My energy was very high, then; I was driven in a creative way. I was reading Stanislavsky's *My Life and Art*, you know? I was thinking in a whole other realm, you know, and then I'd go on the set and shoot *ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES*! I didn't care. That was what was so funny. I didn't care.

**SS:** The part was good.

**YV:** To me, the work was the most important thing. I would just do my best, and it didn't matter to me how much money was involved. I just wanted to work.

**SS:** You played a stage mother in *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN*?

**YV:** Yes! It was fun! First of all, they wanted me to dye my hair henna red, and I

did, for Curtis Harrington. I love him. Diplomatically, knowing that I had played leading roles, he said, "Yvette, this is just a favor for me, because it is not a big part. If you would do it for me, I would really be delighted." So I did. I found that, once I had red hair, a lot of people wanted to paint me. Artists, you know; I'd meet them at a party and they'd say, "Oh, what a very unusual look you have." I had a whole different aura with that red hair. Anyway, I did that for Curtis and it was fun. I had some good moments, and one close-up that I loved, with Debbie Reynolds watching the show. It was a marvelous moment, and I think they cut it out. I'm the famous

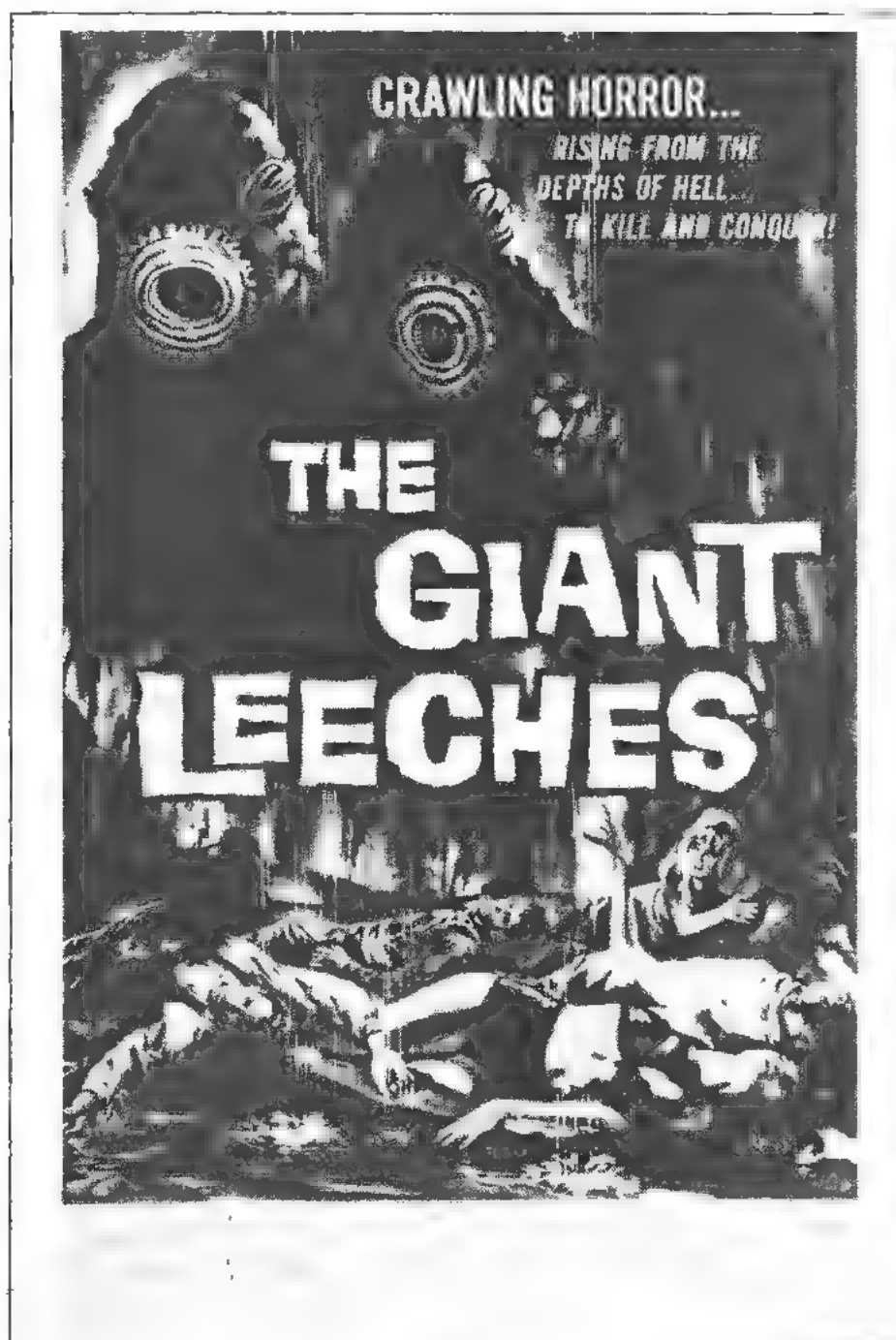
face on the cutting room floor. Every actor says that.

**SS:** The film has a marvelous period quality to it. It's set in the 30s...

**YV:** It's that whole story of everybody wanting their kid to be Shirley Temple, you know? It was fun for me, too, because it was almost a replay. My mother used to take me to dance class and tap dance class. I would say, "I've been through this!"

**SS:** Didn't you take Melvyn Douglas and E.G. Marshall to a screening of *GIANT LEECHES* on 42nd Street?

*Continued on page 97*



on the set with...

# The Sussex Vampire

by David Stuart Davies

"This Agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

—"The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire"

We are now moving into fairly uncharted territory. The bright light of Conan Doyle is burning low, near to extinction, and there be vampyres about! By the time you read this, gentle reader, Granada Television's new two-hour Sherlock Holmes special will be in the can. This episode is *THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE*, a lurid title that belies the nature of the domestic tragedy at the heart of the original tale. Jeremy Paul, who recently scripted *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*, has adapted it, but, unlike the Milverton piece, there is much less to develop and extend here—far fewer strands to tease out and re-weave into a new whole.

In essence, the script of this adventure contains only elements from the Conan Doyle story, and it is virtually a pastiche. Even Craig Dickson, script editor on the series, admitted to me that, with this production, they have moved further from the base line than ever before. On the plus side, there is Jeremy Paul's understanding of and fidelity to the Canon. He knows the characters and loves the stories. Also, Dame Jean Conan Doyle, who sees all the scripts before production, agreed that this is an intelligent and admirable version of one of her father's lesser tales.

At the turn of the year, Granada TV was told by the program planners of Independent Television that they did not want any more hour-long "Sherlocks". This created a dilemma, for Granada had three scripts ready to go: *THE RETIRED COLOURMAN*, *THE GOLDEN PINE NEZ*, and *THE RED CIRCLE*. However, the

two-hour format, pioneered by the Inspector Morse series in Britain, is the "in thing" and, with *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER* doing so well commercially, there really was no argument. Granada contacted Jeremy Paul and asked him to write a two-hour special—in three weeks! Paul told me, "I chose 'The Sussex Vampire' and became consumed by the project." Both he and the executives were delighted with the finished product.

With this script, Jeremy Paul has managed to put the "Gothic"

back into Holmes. The dark mood that was so needed and desperately lacking in Granada's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* permeates the whole of the drama. At the center of this version of the vampire tale is the compelling new character of Stockton, played with chilling authority by Roy Marsden (Adam Dalglish of the P. D. James stories). Stockton convinces the villagers, the viewers, and to some extent Holmes himself that he is a vampire—of a kind. Holmes says of him, "There are, we know, some people who soak up the energy of others, like a sponge, draw out their resources, and pocket them." But the power he wields and the influence he exerts is only part of the tangle Holmes is set to unravel. We still encounter the strange crippled lad, Jacky (Richard Dempsey); his father, Bob Ferguson (Keith Barron); and the injured baby, who is quickly despatched. However, Jeremy Paul places the Ferguson household at the center of a web of intrigue in the village of Lamberley. The threat of bloodsucking now encom-

passes the whole of the community. It is a strange and compelling script—one in which ghosts *do* apply—but whether it is a successful Sherlock Holmes tale is debatable.

In pursuit of more information, I joined the crew on location in Lamberley. The village chosen to represent this Sussex bywater





**ABOVE:** Past and present mingle on the "set" of Granada's new *Sherlock Holmes* mystery. **BELOW:** Two extras lend local color to the predominantly blood-red proceedings. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Jeremy Brett breezes through a blistering day of filming Granada's adaptation of *"The Sussex Vampire"*.

involved in supernatural soliciting is in fact in the Cotswolds—the very middle of England. I travelled down, on a very hot day in May, to the hamlet of Stanton. Leaving the motorway with its hulking, coughing juggernauts, horrid symbols of the modern age, I drove but a few miles into the tranquil Gloucestershire countryside and found myself in a time warp. Stanton is the Dorian Gray of villages: time really *has* stood still here. Apart from a few television aerials (most had been removed for filming) it was, indeed, 1895—or thereabouts. Granada had been busy spreading straw and dried manure on the road and dotting the usual rag-bag of convincing rural-type extras about in order to give further credence to the illusion. Indeed, so perfect was it that Edward Hardwicke expressed a concern that it looked too much like a set and therefore not real. I saw his point.

There is another concern about Stanton: it is so clearly situated in the Cotswolds—the lie of the land, the architecture, and the stone is so typical of that area—that to call the film *THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE* would be a misnomer. It has been suggested that it be re-named *THE LAMBERLEY VAMPIRE*, but Lamberley sounds more like an adjective than a location. I put this point to June Wyndham Davies, the producer, and she agreed. She told me that all references to Sussex had been removed from the script and that decisions about the title would be made when the program is complete. I curled my lip at *THE COTSWOLD VAMPIRE*. That's ludicrous, I protested. If the title really *has* to be changed, my suggestion is *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VAMPIRE*.

While there was a lull in shooting, a dripping Jeremy Brett invited me into his caravan and out of the heat for a chat. He agreed that this script was "pretend Doyle" and admitted that the series has now grown difficult for him: "I'm out of my depth because I can't do my usual trick of bringing Doyle to rehearsal. You see, I only receive the script just before we start a show, and the first week of rehearsals has always been my week for slavishly returning the script back to Doyle, omitting any real departures from the Canon. Now, I'm not able to do that. If I make a criticism, I'm criticizing the adaptor, not Doyle. Basically, it's not the Canon any

more; we're only doing bits. However, I think Jeremy Paul, of all the adaptors, is the closest to and nearest in touch with Doyle."

Brett went on to express his worries on several other counts. He suggested that the new, young directors tended not to be interested in the Baker Street scenes because they provide less scope to be innovative: "We've only had two days in Baker Street in this. Now, I know, for example, in *THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL* we didn't get into Holmes' sitting room at all, but basically it is the platform to all the stories and I would hate to lose that." He was sad that this adventure lacks Mrs. Hudson: "She is the only female I relate to on a regular basis," he grinned, with that Sherlockian twinkle in his eyes. Instead, there is a "Billy" character, but, because Granada was unable to secure the services of Dean Magri, the actor who played Billy in *THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE*, the page boy in this production is called, un-Canonically, Albert.

"Deduction is also what we're beginning to miss," Brett told me. "I really am short on detective work. Too much of this case relies on intuition. That is there in Doyle, of course—Holmes is able to make the most amazing subliminal leaps—but there must also be deduction." He avowed that he would insist on more actual



All photos in this article by David Stuart Davies



*Freddie Jones, a memorable Inspector Baynes in **WISTERIA LODGE**, returns in the role of a gypsy peddler. The actor will be familiar to horror fans from his appearance in Hammer's **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED** (1970).*

detection in the next production, **THE NOBLE BACHELOR**. The script for this, to be written by Trevor Bowen, has not yet been delivered, but already Brett has insisted that Mrs. Hudson appear: "I love Rosalie Williams. She's 72 and she's kept her hair long especially for the part."

I asked the actor, with regard to his power on the set, if directors were in awe of him because he has played the character for so long. He grinned again and shook his head: "I lay myself down like Bambi saying, 'Please help me!' I always tell the director that he should think of me as brand new: I want all the input I can get. For example, Tim Sullivan, who is directing **SUSSEX VAMPIRE**, has wonderful ideas. He brings to the character those wonderful, boyish things that help to illuminate the celibate and the private man—the silly little jokes like, for example, opening the door just before Mrs. Hudson enters. [Brett is referring to an incident in **THE ILLUSTRIOUS CLIENT**.] In this production, Miss Cruddock is looking out of the window as I pass. I double back so she can't see me and then come up and pull a face at the window to give her a fright. Small things like that help to bring life to the performance, I feel. However, I am sure there is now a policy of keeping Jeremy more restrained. You see, I love to break the flow

of a speech to add an inconsequential remark to personalize the whole." Brett went on to give me an example. At the beginning of the current production, Holmes is talking in the Baker Street rooms when he breaks off and picks a cup up from the mantelshelf and says: "That cup has been there three days," and then carries on. "These are my own ideas," Brett told me, "and they help to retain a sense of the domestic. I'm fighting to keep these touches in."

At this point Brett was dragged back into the heat for a take. He was accompanied by an aide with an umbrella to keep him in the shade until the last moment before the cameras rolled and a lady trailing a long wire and holding an electric fan to his face. Dressed as he was, in dark, heavy, Victorian garb, and with his face covered in pore-clogging pancake make-up, I didn't envy our hero.

On the set, Freddie Jones was completing his cameo role as the Peddler, busily selling charms to ward off "wolves and bats and bloodsuckers...for nine pennies only." Freddie is the only actor, apart from the principals, to have played twice in the Holmes series. He was last seen as Inspector Baynes in 1988's **WISTERIA LODGE**.

As I took my leave of that benighted village of Lamberley and re-entered the real, woefully more prosaic world, I knew that when, finally, this "new" adventure of Sherlock Holmes comes to our screens, it would certainly be the subject of much debate.

*David Stuart Davies is the author of **Holmes of the Movies**, **Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair**, **Fixed Point: The Life and Death of Sherlock Holmes**, and **Sherlock Holmes through the Magnifying Glass**. He is co-president of **The Northern Musgraves of Sherlock Holmes Society**.*



# Written in Blood!

## Jeremy Paul on "The Sussex Vampire"

### interview by Jessie Lilley

Rushing in where angels fear to tread, playwright and tele-scripser Jeremy Paul wrote a two-hour adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" in a remarkably short period of time. Here's the story...

**Scarlet Street:** You had to write the script for *THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE* in only three weeks. How did you manage?

**Jeremy Paul:** Well, the answer is that I can't remember! Sometimes it works well that way. It concentrates the mind; you just go for it. I used very little of the original story—all I used was the name, in a way, and invented some new characters. I think

I did it with about two days to spare. (Laughs) You know, pressure really helps. You don't want to do it every day, but I just took myself off and...

**SS:** Locked yourself away for awhile?

**JP:** Yes.

**SS:** Unlike "Charles Augustus Milverton", which was the basis for *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*, there's little background material in "The Sussex Vampire".

**JP:** The crucial difference between the two was that, within "Milverton", one could winkle out little half-sentences and make whole stories that Conan Doyle had triggered but not pursued; you really did have something to go on within the story. But with "The Sussex Vampire", there really wasn't anything. It couldn't be a vampire in the traditional sense, because Holmes has finally to be a realist. He can only tell us about his relationships with the supernatural—like the giant rat of Su-

matra—as long as we never have to see it and find out what it's about. You can't have Holmes meeting Dracula, because you break the line there; you break the reality of Holmes. And you go into areas of a kind of Gothic fantasy, which I don't think sits easily with Sherlock...

**SS:** So, what's the solution?

**JP:** You have to examine the nature of the word "vampire". There are lots of different kinds of vampirism. There's a kind of emotional vampire, a psychological vampire—people who exert strange, unexplained pressures on other human beings. Svengali, for example. Moriarty has a sort of vampirism about him. So you create a character, an opponent for Holmes who may have the semblance of vampirism, who may test Sherlock's own, rigid, logical mind to its very last moment. Everything seems to show that there is really a Dracula abroad.



Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke climb aboard a buggy as they prepare to track down a vampire.



**Dr. Watson, superstar.** No, Edward Hardwicke hasn't gone Hollywood; he is simply avoiding the midday sun.

**SS:** Sounds like fun.

**JP:** I think this one is a great deal of fun, actually. In fact, you've chosen a very interesting night to call, because they're filming the huge spectacular climax.

**SS:** You mentioned briefly the giant rat of Sumatra. Did the rat make it into your script?

**JP:** Yes, he's a passing reference. In "The Sussex Vampire" there are lovely references to the really obscure. Watson says, "We ought to do something about this person who thinks there are vampires about." And Holmes looks up "vampire" under "v" in his index and gets carried away with all sorts of wonderful, obscure "v" cases that we never, ever, heard about.

**SS:** Last time we spoke, you mentioned that the two hour format enabled you to elaborate on life in Baker Street. We understand that there's not much action set in Baker Street this time.

**JP:** No, there isn't. There's a certain amount of exposition that has to be dealt with in Baker Street, but that's kind of logistical. I suppose it was a proper decision, because once you get out into the village and into the story—the story I came up with—it takes place out and about more. Holmes and Watson go down to this village and get caught up in extraordinary events. It was really an artistic decision this time, not to use too much Baker Street.

**SS:** So Mrs. Hudson doesn't appear?

**JP:** No. Rather than just give Mrs. Hudson a token sentence or two, which I think would be an insult to the actress, I preferred to leave her out—with the defense that Trevor Bowen is going to use her, I think, in his.

**SS:** We interviewed Rosalie Williams, who plays Mrs. Hudson. She was a delight.

**JP:** Ah, she's wonderful. But because she's such a wonderful actress and person,

I hated the idea of giving her just a quick entrance and exit. I just didn't like that.

**SS:** But you've included the pageboy, Billy.

**JP:** Yes. He's actually called something else, because I don't think we could get the boy who played Billy.

**SS:** We'd heard the character's name might be changed to Albert.

**JP:** Yes, because I think the Billy actor wasn't available. We didn't want to use someone else in the same part, particularly since you'd made such a nice point about how Billy and that particular boy had made an impact. You had his photo in *Scarlet Street*.

**SS:** Yes. Dean Magri.

**JP:** Yes.

**SS:** So we're responsible?

**JP:** I feel we must lay that at your door. I think Billy is mentioned; Albert is Billy's temporary replacement that day. We'll keep consistent with it in some way.

**SS:** Is it true that all reference to Sussex, including the title, has been eliminated?

**JP:** Yes, there's a very practical reason for that. It's funny, but the Sussex villages have gotten so modern that they don't film very well in period terms, particularly if you're moving around the village. Also, there is a real problem in that they didn't want to take the crew that far away from Manchester. So we popped down into the Cotswolds; we found a beautiful village, but it is so identifiably Gloucestershire that the art director actually pleaded with us and said "Please don't call it THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, 'cause I'm going to look like a complete fool!" Architecturally, the Cotswolds have a very particular stamp about them.

**SS:** We'd never be aware of that here in the States...

**JP:** Yes, but we certainly would, and it would look as if we couldn't afford to travel an extra 150 miles. Lamberley is the name of the village in the story, so we decided that was the way out of that problem.

**SS:** So it's going to be *THE LAMBERLEY VAMPIRE*?

**JP:** *THE VAMPIRE OF LAMBERLEY*. If the expectation is "The Sussex Vampire", which is a marvelous title, that's not what you're going to get—because I haven't given you "The Sussex Vampire", in fact, I've used so little of it.

**SS:** You've created a new character named Stockton for the story. What can you tell us about him?

**JP:** An actor called Roy Marsden, whom you may know, is the man suspected of being a vampire in the village. An old vicar comes to Holmes and says, "I've got this very disturbing situation in my village. There is a man who's frightening the people, and they are convinced that he is a vampire." It's known that Stockton belongs to an old village family who, 100 years before, were perceived as vampires. All sorts of strange things happen, and people are dying. There has been a particular disaster in the village, which I won't give away. So Holmes goes there, saying, "This is nonsense; there's no such thing as vampires!" But Watson says, "Well, I don't know about that. I mean, look at the evidence. You believe in evidence. And here are all these extraordinary coincidences." Holmes engages with Stockton, and Stockton is fully aware that he's being investigated by Sherlock Holmes. It's the relationship between them which is intriguing.

**SS:** Have the one-hour scripts that were prepared before it was decided to go to a two-hour format been shelved?

**JP:** Well, that's what we were led to believe, but the last time I spoke to Sally Head, who is the head of drama, she said, "Well, it's still open. We may come back to them." Obviously, not for a while. It's to do with money and accountancy and all kinds of things like that.



**Norma West was a memorable Lady Swinstead in *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*.**



Lady Eva (Serena Gordon) seeks help from Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke) after being threatened by Charles Augustus Milverton, **THE MASTER BLACKMAILER**.

**SS:** Granada's been shaken up a bit in the last few months.

**JP:** Yes, very much so. They've suddenly decided that, cost-effectively, it's better to make one two-hour episode than three one-hour episodes. It's all about money.

**SS:** Do you know if there are any plans beyond filming **THE NOBLE BACHELOR** in the fall?

**JP:** No. There's a key time in September, a date in September, when all the options on the actors come up for review. So decisions will have to be made and I think everybody is waiting for that.

**SS:** When **THE MASTER BLACKMAILER** was shown in England, there was much comment over the fact that the story's final scene, in which Inspector Lestrade asks Holmes to investigate Milverton's death, was cut.

**JP:** Looking back on it, I think we all regretted that. It was written, as you know, but when you put stories into the hands of filmmakers you get a film rhythm going. The scene with Lady Swinstead killing Milverton built to such an extraordinary, emotional climax that it was argued—though I have to say that it was argued without my contribution to it—that it was essentially the end of the piece. There was a little coda afterwards, which was the auction, but essentially it had peaked and delivered. I had written a slightly humorous scene with Lestrade's investigation, and I put in a lot of what might be considered to be cheap jokes. (Laughs) On the page it seemed to be fine; it seemed to be consistent with the whole. But there was

something quite shocking about the ending; Milverton got up such a head of steam of malevolence that we were really saying to Lady Swinstead: "Get him! Get him!" In terms of film storytelling, to go back to another emotional level seemed, in the judgement of directors, editors, and producers, to be the wrong move.



A considerably more modern, but perhaps less charming, means of conveyance lurks behind Holmes and Watson's buggy during the filming of Granada TV's latest two-hour mystery special.

**SS:** It would be wonderful if the scene could be restored for its American TV debut or, better still, its video release.

**JP:** Unless one saw the scene intact, one couldn't be sure if cutting it was correct or not. It's the old problem. Of course, one test is that, if you don't know the short story, do you feel there is anything missing? If you ask that of anybody who isn't familiar with the story, the answer would always be "No."

**SS:** The reason we missed it, really, is that Colin Jeavons is a splendid Lestrade and not used often enough.

**JP:** What did you think about Holmes and Agatha, the maid?

**SS:** Oh, that worked. Jeremy Brett played their scenes in such a childlike manner.

**JP:** Yes!

**SS:** When Agatha asked Holmes for a kiss, and he said, "I don't know how..."

**JP:** Sophie Thompson was so good as Agatha. Brett did have problems; you know, the young girl and the older man...

**SS:** He played it beautifully. Later, when Holmes removed his disguise and visited Milverton, and Agatha almost realized...

**JP:** Well, that's right. I really didn't want it to be definite. I think maybe we emphasized it a little too much in the production, the sense that he was Holmes and she had recognized it, but the way she played it was just perfect.

**SS:** Mr. Paul, thank you once again for taking time to talk with us

**JP:** Not at all. I enjoyed it. Keep in touch.

*American International*

presents

VINCENT PRICE

ELIZABETH SHEPHERD

STARRING IN

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S

# TOMB of LIGEIA

IN  
COLORSCOPE

An Appreciation  
by Michael Orlando Yaccarino

The work of Edgar Allan Poe has been translated to the screen more than any other writer of horror literature. His terrifying imagination has served, sometimes quite freely, as the basis for many film adaptations—some memorable, many embarrassingly forgettable. Most notable are the films of producer/director Roger Corman, made for American International Pictures in the 1960s. Of Corman's many wonderful Poe-inspired films, *TOMB OF LIGEIA* (1965) is certainly the most faithful to its author in word and spirit. Fittingly enough, it is the last time Corman directed a Poe picture.

There are many noteworthy aspects of the film. Vincent Price, as the ambiguous Verden Fell, gives a performance marked by subtle nuances seldom seen in his many more outlandish roles. Elizabeth Shepherd (as Ligeia and Rowena) is truly splendid. The production values are excellent, especially the art direction by Colin Southcott and the color cinematography by Arthur Grant. Corman keeps everything tantalizingly restrained until the horror-filled finale.

Among the film's many fine features, Robert Towne's screenplay deserves special praise and exploration. Towne not only stays true to the source material, but also expands the text and its implications. In the screenwriter's masterful hands, *TOMB OF LIGEIA* unfolds as a thoroughly adult, frightening fairy tale.

The original short story, simply entitled "Ligeia", concerns the utter obsession of an unnamed narrator for his darkly beautiful and mysterious wife, the Lady Ligeia. Their strange co-existence is cut short by her untimely death. Months later, the distraught, opium-addicted widower leaves their home on the Rhine and moves to a crumbling abbey "in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England".

Soon the narrator transforms the place into a phantasmagoric lair filled with Egyptian sarcophagi, arabesque-covered tapestries, and golden candelabra. He marries the Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine ("in a moment of mental alienation", he adds). Their unhappy marriage is overshadowed by the haunting memory of Ligeia. Two months later, Rowena is taken ill and dies. It is inferred that Ligeia, from beyond the grave, has caused Rowena's death.

Keeping vigil over his deceased wife, the narrator spends the night watching the corpse as it is revived again

and again of its own will. Finally, Rowena rises—now transformed into the Lady Ligeia.

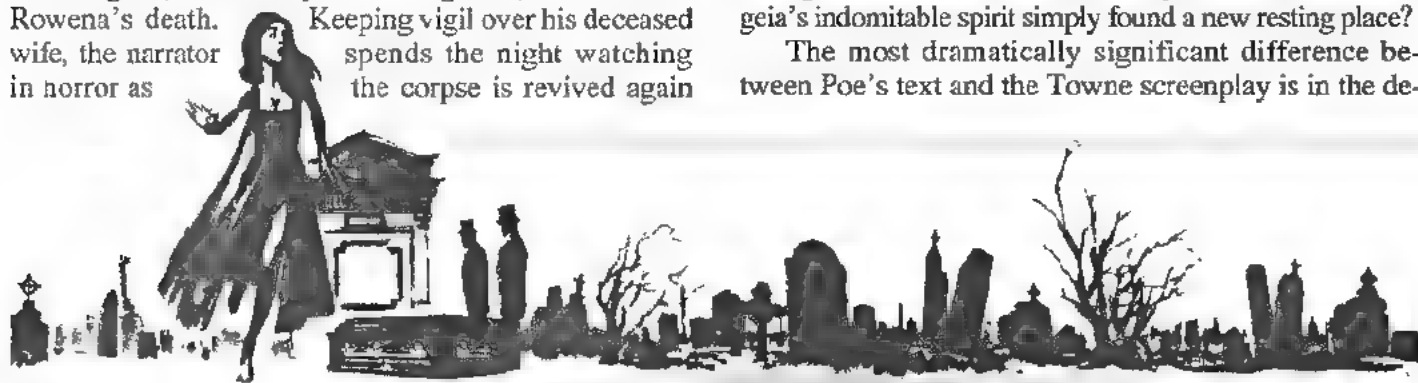
Throughout the story, Ligeia proclaims that the world is a godless place ruled by tragedy and invisible woe. She articulates these beliefs in the form of a hauntingly disturbing poem, "The Conqueror Worm". Most important, Poe's tale begins with a fragment, echoed throughout, which is attributed to the 17th century scholar Joseph Glanvill: "And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. . . Man does not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will".

One of the central questions raised by the text is whether, in reality, Rowena has been taken over by Ligeia with her "eager vehemence of desire for life". It must be noted that the story is a first-person narrative told from the drug-affected perspective of the narrator. It can be strongly argued that the fantastic ending of the tale is simply a hallucination brought on by grief, opium, and possible psychosis. Or maybe not.

Unlike Poe's account, *TOMB OF LIGEIA* is told in a fairly objective, third-person style, with a notable excursion into an imaginatively-handled dream sequence. Even so, during the climax, we observe Fell alone with the re-animated Ligeia. Therefore, the possibility that the film's events are supernatural in origin is left open to speculation. In fact, although it is not offered in the original story, a plausible explanation for Fell's wildly obsessive behavior is advanced in the film.

During the final sequences, the servant Kenrick (Oliver Johnston) reveals that, on her deathbed, Ligeia captured Fell in her deadly gaze and ordered him, through sheer force of will, to care for her even after she dies. In the chilling scene that follows, Rowena attempts to break the hypnotic spell by re-creating this deathbed scene, casting herself in the role of Ligeia and commanding Fell to finally accept her demise. Rowena almost loses her own life in the grim procedure. However, is it truly a comfort when Rowena's former fiancé, Christopher (John Westbrook), lifts the shroudlike veil from her face and realizes that she is still alive? Rowena holds him in her gaze and speaks his name, but is it really Rowena, or has Ligeia's indomitable spirit simply found a new resting place?

The most dramatically significant difference between Poe's text and the Towne screenplay is in the de-





**ABOVE:** *The Lady Rowena (Elizabeth Shepherd) gives over her will to her hypnotic husband, Verden Fell (Vincent Price), in the American International Picture TOMB OF LIGEIA (1965). NEXT PAGE:* A section of the *TOMB OF LIGEIA* pressbook.

velopment of the character of Rowena. In the original story, she is little more than the sickly second wife of the opium-deranged narrator, and, eventually, a host for Ligeia's undying will. Towne's Rowena is made of much stronger stuff.

In the film, we first encounter Rowena as she daringly gallops across the moors during a fox hunt. She is the only woman among a group of aristocratic sportsmen. (Her father affectionately refers to her as "a willful bitch".) The proper, boring Christopher cannot satisfy her with the prospect of a life within rigid 19th-century upper-class English society. In fact, it is her "willful" nature that leads Rowena to her first, fateful meeting with Verden Fell. While trespassing on Fell's property, she is thrown from her horse and lands upon Ligeia's grave.

The black-clad and brooding Verden Fell embodies many qualities attractive to Rowena, qualities that are missing from her current life. Tellingly, it is Fell's offer of romance in the Gothic tradition (with a hint of cruel passion) that entices her most. She soon realizes that she has married into a situation more bizarre than she could have imagined, but, unlike the formless Lady Trevanion of the original text, Towne's resourceful Rowena takes action from the very start to uncover her husband's mysterious behavior.

*Michael Orlando Yaccarino is a graduate of the New York University Film School and has completed an internship at the Film Study Center of the Museum of Modern Art. He is a devotee of the horror cinema.*

In recent correspondence with Roger Corman, the director commented on the memorable performances given by Vincent Price and Elizabeth Shepherd:

Bob [Towne] and I felt we wanted to make Rowena a stronger character than she was in the original tale. This was, of course, a conscious choice, and after we hired Elizabeth, we worked on this quite a bit. Vincent and I deliberately tried to realize a somewhat more restrained performance because the film was to a large extent a love story as well as a horror film, and in fact I think it was one of the best of the Poe pictures, although *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* [1964] and *THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER* [1960] would be my personal favorites.

Poe's brief story is largely composed of finely-wrought, macabre descriptions born of the narrator's outré state of mind. The actual events of the text can be summed up in several sentences. Using Poe as his starting point, Towne elaborated upon the tale, including many completely original narrative events and evocative touches that are true to the spirit of Poe and his "Ligeia".

In one of the film's most memorable sequences, Rowena nearly loses her life in a bell tower. The sequence begins outside as Fell reveals to Christopher the mysterious disappearance of Ligeia's death date from the inscription upon her tomb—with the

*Continued on page 54*

# Price Calls "Tomb of Ligeia" Most Terrifying of Poe Films

"It is the most terrifying Poe film ever made," actor Vincent Price says of "The Tomb of Ligeia," the new American International Pictures terror production based upon the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

Brilliantly and imaginatively directed by Roger Corman, the new cinema version of the Maryland poet's terror tales introduces English actress Elizabeth Shepherd in the title role of a beautiful, voluptuous woman whose will is so powerful, so evil, that it survives her own death.

Her determination to outlive her will, upon the living brings a strange delight to her surviving husband and naked horror to the girl he later kills to leave with and marry.

In the end, Ligeia's evil brings both to the point of madness and into a situation from which death would be a welcome relief.

Filmed in Color and Scope largely on location in and around a sinister, 1600-year-old Abbey in Norfolk, England, the supporting cast of "Tomb of Ligeia" includes John Westbrook, Derek Francis, Oliver Johnston and Robert Adam.



VINCENT PRICE

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## British Palmist Thinks Price May Succeed

British predictions Winston Clark, who has read the palms of many film stars predicted during the filming of American International's "Tomb of Ligeia" at Shepperton Studios in London that actor, author and art connoisseur Vincent Price may have a bright and successful future.

"He has achieved inner happiness and that is going to be the solid basis for some very good work in the future," Mr. Clark said.

Price, at 52, has appeared in more than 90 full-length films ranging from classics like "Laura" and "Diogenes" to the highly successful series of AIP productions based upon the works of Edgar Allan Poe of which "Tomb of Ligeia" is the eighth.

## Familiar British Voice Heard In 'Tomb Of Ligeia'

An actor whose voice is as well known to Britons as that of James Cagney or Peter Lorre is to Americans plays the young romantic lead in "Tomb of Ligeia," American International's latest terror drama based upon the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

He is John Westbrook, whose voice is known to millions in Britain as the reader of "A Book at Bedtime" for the BBC. He plays a supporting role to Vincent Price who stars in the spine tingling opening scene at the Shepperton Theatre.

Westbrook's 15-minute BBC program airs at 11 p.m. nightly and takes the form of an installment of a novel. He is so highly regarded as a narrator that his reputation has already been extended to America where he appeared in New York and Washington.

In Manhattan, he narrated "The Play of Daniel" produced by the Prometheus Society and in Washington he spoke Cocteau's narrative production of the Stravinsky opera "Oedipus Rex."

He plays the role of Christopher, whose love for the bride of Vincent Price puts him through arduous trials when she becomes embroiled in the horrendous saga of a woman who defies death.



JOHN WESTBROOK

## "Tomb of Ligeia" Best of Poe Tales

Of all the tales of terror by Edgar Allan Poe probably none achieves such an atmosphere of brooding horror as his short story which has now been brought to the screen by American International Pictures as "Tomb of Ligeia."

Starring Vincent Price and Elizabeth Shepherd, this blood-chilling adventure into the macabre set in 19th century England, is about a beautiful, voluptuous woman whose will is so powerful, so evil, that it survives her own death.

The husband she has left behind seems terrified but pleased by her posthumous machinations and it is his new bride who experiences naked horror which brings her to the brink of madness.

In a fantastic climax, one that remains easily the most ghastly and horrifying in movie history, the whole appalling secret of Ligeia's strange power is exposed.

Filmed in Color and Scope largely on location in a 1600-year-old Abbey in Norfolk, England, this eighth AIP production based upon a Poe work is directed by Roger Corman.

The supporting cast included John Westbrook, Derek Francis, Oliver Johnston and Robert Adam. The screenplay is by Robert Towne.



ELIZABETH SHEPHERD  
— as Ligeia

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ELIZABETH SHEPHERD  
— as Rowena

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**DUAL ROLE DEBUT** — English stage actress Elizabeth Shepherd makes her American motion picture debut playing the dual roles of Rowena, the quick, and Ligeia, the dead, in American International Pictures' new Poe terror production "Tomb of Ligeia" opening at the Theatre.

## NEW AIP FILM FIND BRINGS CLASSICAL BACKGROUND TO ROLE IN POE'S 'TOMB OF LIGEIA'

The dual role of Ligeia and Rowena played by English actress Elizabeth Shepherd in American International's "The Tomb of Ligeia" has been described by her as the chance of a life time for which she spent a life time in preparation.

She was discovered for the role by Director Roger Corman who has made seven previous AIP terror films based upon the classic works of Edgar Allan Poe and she brings to the part a long and impressive list of credits in classic stage plays.

Born 27 years ago in London, Elizabeth began her stage career while attending Bristol University when she joined a small group of dedicated people who wanted to interpret Shakespeare more imaginatively in the young.

She made three recordings of Twelfth Night, Macbeth and Julius Caesar with the Globe Shakespeare Company for a publisher of educational recordings.

Then after graduation, she played Juliet in a Bristol production of "Romeo and Juliet" and the role of a middle-aged woman in Ligo Betts "The Investigator" in a London Sunday Times drama festival during which she was introduced to theatrical agent Peter Eadie.

Eadie recruited her for the Manchester Library Theatre, a breeding ground of stars. She stayed with them a year, paying in works as varied as

those of Shakespeare and Lorca, and then joined a touring company sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

With the Council, Elizabeth played "Romeo and Juliet" and in Peter Ustinov's contemporary "Romanoff and Juliet" after which she joined the Nottingham Playhouse for plays as widely different as "Hamlet," in which she played Ophelia, and "The Man With the Golden Arm," in which she essayed the role originated by Kim Novak.

Then finally backgrounded in the theatre, she made her West End stage debut in Tennessee Williams' "Period of Adjustment" and molded a fine television career in adaptations of Wolpole's "The Cathedral," Dickens' "Bleak House," Cronin's "The Citadel" and many other plays.

Her role in American International's "Tomb of Ligeia" is a virtual tour de force for the 420-pound blonde, blue-eyed Elizabeth. She portrays a woman who believes so strongly that death need not be accepted she is able to weave a web of horror for her widower and his bride after her death.

## British Village Ignores 'Tomb of Ligeia' As Its Parson Does a Walk On

All the world knows the British are blasé but when the 1600-year-old and ancient village of Swatham in Norfolk, England, the numskullers were in for the surprise of a lifetime.

Despite the fact that Vincent Price and his co-star Elizabeth Shepherd were enacting a strange wedding sequence in their tiny 900-year-old Church of St. John, villagers were too busy harvesting the local fruit crop to notice. Even the Rector took such passive interest that he inadvertently walked right through one of the principal scenes of photography.

"You must excuse me," he told Director Roger Corman, "but the work of the Parish must go on." It has been going on, the "Tomb of Ligeia" actors learned, at the same unhurried, disinterested pace for more than 1000 years in the tiny Surrey countryside.

## AIP's NEW ENGLISH ACTRESS DENIES SHE'S SNOBBISH

By VINCENT SMITH

LONDON—A quick journey to Swatham near the Deer Leap Woods of Surrey where American International Pictures was filming its new horror production "Tomb of Ligeia" based on a philosophy expressed in an Edgar Allan Poe short story, proved more horrifying at stage than on the set for I discovered there an actress who denies she is a snob.

Many a civilian, as you know, has long held the impression that actresses are most insufferable snobs who deny to be very themselves talent-endowed with the right to act out the ways other people should live. At least that is an impression this reporter has long held.

But upon meeting young, 27-year-old Elizabeth Shepherd, who makes her American film debut in "Tomb of Ligeia" I was intrigued to hear a most plausible answer for some of the unbecoming conduct of snobbishness of her profession.

It isn't snobbishness of a Garbo complex which causes actresses to keep their telephone numbers a secret. It's simply that once you get your picture in the newspapers you start getting the most obscene phone calls," she explained.

A blue-eyed blonde of rare, unadorned beauty, I could well understand the interest of men in knowing her phone number. Why I know several fellows who would be so interested simply to know her zip code number and I told her so.

And, of course, the clever British girl had a ready reply for even that quip.

"My section of London is alive with peep e-mails and cars but it's so full of it that even American tourists treat it with respect. It hasn't a zip code but it does have a heavenly name—The Angel is region."

Horried by how that this beauty's neither snobbish nor would any man date be free in a London neighborhood named The Angel, I turned the conversation to the popular subject of The Beatles.

But, alas, I was again to be fooled. "The current obsession with ex-

traneous youth and their antics is self-defeating," she observed. "Why the young ones are made so knowing and self-conscious by adult concern with what they do that they are not really young any more."

Of course, this caused another switch in the conversation and I asked about her co-starring role opposite Vincent Price in "Tomb of Ligeia," commenting derisively that from what I had seen of the filming it is the most unconventional since out Miss Shepherd plays both Rowena, the quick, and Ligeia, the dead—virtually terrorizing herself to the brink of insanity as the story develops.

Most significant of all, I observed, is the fact that Rowena boldly invades Vincent Price's cobwebby old castle, bent on marrying him.

"I'm very happy with the role of Rowena," my lovely interviewee countered. "Her kind of dumbness is exciting. I've also done things because I wanted to do them. I've been impulsive, but I haven't deliberately flouted convention. It just happened."

And thusly clobbered in my every question by this thinking young woman I quickly thumbed the studio prepared biography I held in my hand and turned the talk to her acting career which has embraced some distinguished stage success at the Old Vic and at Wyndham where she appeared in "Period of Adjustment."

"Sometimes I get very tired of being just an actress," the blue-eyed one. "I want just to be a pretty face."

So when you see this lovely new English stage star making her international film debut in "Tomb of Ligeia" on your own screen remember, she is no snob. She would rather be just another pretty face, and you have my permission to conduct the next interview.



**HEROIC RESCUE** — Vincent Price carries Elizabeth Shepherd, who has injured her ankle, to his home in a scene from American International's new Poe terror production "The Tomb of Ligeia" opening at the Theatre on

## NEW AIP POE THRILLER OPENS HERE TOMORROW

The newest in American International's series of Poe terror films "Tomb of Ligeia" opens at the Theatre on

Starring Vincent Price and a new English beauty, Elizabeth Shepherd the spine-tingling drama is the story of a woman so evil that her will survives her death and arranges her widower and the girl he later marries.

Filmed in Color and Scope on location in a 1600-year-old English abbey, "Tomb of Ligeia" is the eighth AIP film based upon the classic works of Edgar Allan Poe. All are the directorial work of Roger Corman. The screenplay is by Robert Towne.



Horror veteran Vincent Price (LEFT) fine-tunes a scene with director Roger Corman (RIGHT) on location during the shooting of AIP's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*.

added revelation that he, Fell, might be unconsciously responsible for the deed. Meanwhile, within the abbey, Rowena matches wits with Fell's devilish feline pet, a cat who may be housing the spirit of the dear departed Ligeia.

With Fell's black, wrap-around spectacles clasped between its fangs, the cat swiftly ascends the perilous steps of the tower's interior. Blinded by defiance of this vengeful creature, Rowena follows the cat until she is left helpless on a dangerous ledge. Over this delicate chase scene, Fell can be heard paraphrasing an especially poetic passage from the original tale, in which he describes Ligeia's power over him and her struggle for life itself. "Nor lie in death forever. . . ." intones Price's velvet voice as Shepherd moves along decaying, shadowy corridors and up treacherous stairways. He likens the Lady Ligeia to a "moving candle" and explains that he can hear "the lightness of her footfall in the fluttering of a moth's wing against a closed windowpane". In a failed attempt to reach the cat, Rowena inadvertently sets the derelict bell in motion. Hearing the unexpected peals, Fell and Christopher speed to the tower.

Rowena is soon rescued and finds temporary comfort in Fell's arms, unaware of what is to come. This sequence is immediately followed by a scene depicting their wedding day. The two events are linked by the sound of the ringing bells as they blend from one scene to the next. (One of Poe's most famous poems, "The Bells", describes their many uses, from announcing birth to heralding death. Also, it should be briefly noted that the name "Fell" calls to mind "fall", as in "The Fall of the House of Usher", another tale concerning a reclusive man plagued by an unnatural attachment to a woman—in this case Roderick Usher's sister, who is the object of Usher's obsessions.)

Probably the most obvious and ingeniously used homage to Poe is the inclusion of the black cat in the proceedings. The fiendish feline, who does not appear in the original story, works on many levels in the film. In Poe's well-known tale "The Black Cat", a deranged husband murders his wife and entombs her corpse behind a cellar wall, inadvertently trapping a devilish black cat whose wails result in the husband's exposure. In the context of the story, the figure of the cat becomes a metaphor for the murderous narrator's unconscious guilt. (Similarly, in Poe's "The Tell-

Tale Heart", the perpetrator of a heinous crime is plagued by a past sin that will not remain hidden.)

In *TOMB OF LIGEIA*, Fell mentions his deceased wife's devotion to the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, which, by inference, include reincarnation. Although never blatantly stated, there is the possibility that the cat harbors Ligeia's vengeful soul, back from the grave to destroy her husband's second marriage. In any case, the mysterious feline acts as a catalyst in several important sequences. When Rowena and Fell first meet during the hunt, the cat makes off with the dead fox's body. (The fox makes a bloody reappearance in a subsequent scene.) Later, as noted, the cat almost entices Rowena to her death in the bell tower. In the final sequence, the frenzied animal blinds its master. Fell kills the beast and meets his own fiery demise in the arms of his beloved and evil first wife.

The film opened to favorable reaction in the United Kingdom. The *London Times* remarked, "Here at last Mr. Corman has done what it always seemed he might be able some time to do: make a film which could without absurdity be spoken of in the same breath as Cocteau's *ORPHEE* (1950)." In the United States, New York City's Museum of Modern Art gave the film a special four-day screening. *Newsweek* magazine said of *TOMB OF LIGEIA* that it "may not be the best of his [Corman's] series of Edgar Allan Poe

divertimentos, but it is the most far-out, and, in the last half hour or so, his most concentrated piece of black magic." The *New York Times* praised the film for its "excellent Gothic settings, arresting color schemes and camera mobility".

The previous films in the AIP/Poe series were characteristically outlandish in their performances, sets, costumes, and scores. Expansion of the source material was extensive, but necessary in producing a feature-length film. Perhaps it is *TOMB OF LIGEIA*'s curiously successful blend of the horrific and the romantic, presented in a muted but colorful style, that results in its uniqueness within the series. It arguably captures the spirit of Poe more than any of Corman's previous films (more than any other screen adaptation of the writer's work, for that matter). As a result of the film's many virtues, when Vincent Price intones "Give your will over to mine. . . .", we in the audience most certainly do.



## TOMB OF LIGEIA

### Credits

Alta Vista Film Productions. Distributor: American International Pictures. Eastmancolor by Pathé/35mm (Colorscope). A Roger Corman production. Producers: Pat Green, Roger Corman. Assistant Producer: Paul Mayersberg. Director: Roger Corman. Screenplay: Robert Towne. Photography: Arthur Grant. Art Director: Colin Southcott. Main Titles: Francis Rodker. Film Editor: Alfred Cox. Music composed and conducted by Kenneth V. Jones. Sound Design: Les Wiggins, Don Ranasinghe. Sound Recording: Bert Ross, John Aldred. Assistant Director: David Tringham. Make-up: George Blackler. Hair Styles: Pearl Orton. Special Effects: Ted Samuels. Running time: 81 minutes.

### Cast

Vincent Price (Verden Fell), Elizabeth Shepherd (Lady Ligeia/Lady Rowena), John Westbrook (Christopher Gough), Oliver Johnston (Kenrick), Derek Francis (Lord Trevanion), Richard Vernon (Dr. Vivian), Ronald Adam (parson), Frank Thornton (Peperel), Denis Gilmore (livery boy).

# Vincent Price

## The Merchant of Menace

Interview by Michael Orlando Yaccarino

**V**incent Price is the consummate American horror-film actor of the last half of this century, carrying the torch passed on by Chaney and Karloff. Unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Price has effortlessly crossed genres and media to create a memorable legacy of quality film and stage performances, books, and lectures. The common link among his endeavors is the masterful skill and razor sharp wit that accompany the star's frequent successes.

Vincent Leonard Price was born on May 27, 1911, into a prominent and respected family in St. Louis, Missouri. As a result of being part of this loving and progressive family, he came into contact with the arts at a very early age. His exposure to theatre, movies, music, fine cooking, and art during these years helped shape his later life. While studying art at Yale and London's Courtauld Institute, Price's interest in the theatre blossomed. It was through his association with an amateur theatrical company in England that he landed his first major role, Prince Albert in *VICTORIA REGINA* (1935).

Shortly after, Price was featured in a series of Hollywood movies as a young and handsome leading man opposite such actresses as Constance Bennett in *SERVICE DE LUXE* (1938), Bette Davis in *THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX* (1939), and, most memorably, Gene Tierney in one of the era's greatest murder mysteries, *LAURA* (1944). In 1939 he had his first cinematic encounter with Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone, in Universal's pseudo-Shakespearean shocker *TOWER OF LONDON*. Price

continued throughout the 40s and early 50s in a variety of quality pictures, but it was his sinister performance in the 3-D extravaganza *HOUSE OF WAX* (1953) that proved him to be an actor who could forever be counted on to

including *THE FLY* (1958) and *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959). Price starred in William Castle's *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* (1958) and *THE TINGLER* (1959), which offered not only shock value, but also flying skeletons and buzzing theatre seats.

Beginning with *HOUSE OF USHER* in 1960, Price established a long and fruitful association with Roger Corman, resulting in an unforgettable series of colorful Poe-inspired films.

To connoisseurs of the horror film, the name 'Vincent Price' is synonymous with the field's unique and brilliantly portrayed villains—in other words, our heroes. He is the wildly insane Nicholas Medina, lowering the infernal pendulum upon his nemesis within the echoing pit of his man-made hell (1961's *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*). As the tragically misunderstood Edward Lionheart, he must eventually die in a blazing finale rather than bow to those who would mock him (1973's *THEATRE OF BLOOD*). He is the devilish Dr. Anton Phibes, who savagely (and hysterically) murders a group of London physicians, all in the name of marital bliss (1971's *THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES*). Most satisfying of all, he escapes the law as he serenely sails off into eternal glory upon a grand golden barge (1972's *DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN*).

Among his many marvelously rendered horror roles, Price's embodiment of the doomed Verden Fell in Roger Corman's *TOMB OF LIGEIA* (1965) stands out. Here, in an exclusive interview, the actor discusses his views on the making of that film, his career, and a life fully lived.



*Vincent Price on the set of MYSTERY!*

frighten the wits out of his audience—much to their pleasure.

From 1953 on, though he maintained roles in non-horror films (his nastiness as Baka in Cecil B. De Mille's 1956 epic *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* inspired Charlton Heston's Moses to strangle him), his career took a decided turn toward the macabre. He appeared in some of the 50s' most memorable horror films,

*Scarlet Street: You once referred to TOMB OF LIGEIA as perhaps Roger Corman's most "far-out" horror film. What was its genesis?*

**Vincent Price:** For a long time I had had an idea to do a film in a ruin—playing it almost as if the ruin were a stripped theatrical set. I talked to Roger about it. We agreed that something like this would be difficult to do in America, since nothing would be as authentically old as what we had in mind. He promised that one day we'd do it and so he found this wonderful location. It was an abbey in Norfolk, England, that had been stripped during the time of Henry VIII. Somehow or other, the location had more of a structural thing about it that worked. And, of course, it made this marvelous atmosphere because you didn't know whether you were inside or outside.

**SS:** The AIP/Poe films were based on very brief tales by the master of the macabre. Was it difficult to expand such a short story as "Ligeia" into a full-length film?

**VP:** It's a big problem, you know, to turn a short story into a long movie. Consequently, you always had to add something else to Poe to get a cohesive whole of his story. I think TOMB OF LIGEIA came closer to Poe than any other of them. A lot of this was because of the Robert Towne screenplay. It's a hard subject to do. I mean, necrophilia is hardly the scenario for a hit picture!

**SS:** So you were pleased with the result?

**VP:** It somehow came off, I think, very well. I thought Elizabeth [Shepherd] was wonderful in it. And I thought my stuff came off as well as anything I did with Roger. I had a wonderful time making it, because I was up there in that beautiful country and able to go around and see some of the incredible things that were still there. I did a picture later on called THE CONQUEROR WORM, which was done near there. In fact, we only had to take down two television antennas to be back in the 16th century.

**SS:** During the making of TOMB OF LIGEIA, did any unusual off-screen moments occur?

**VP:** There was a famous sort of occurrence that happened during the shooting of the final scenes, when the house burns down. You know, they painted the set with highly inflammable liquid rubber cement. Of course, there were signs up all over the set warning of this, because it gives off a gas when ignited. Elizabeth and I were positioned under some ruined timber that had fallen on us that was quite heavy. Somebody walked onto the set and lit a match and the whole thing exploded before the camera was rolling. Poor Roger got set back a day, and on those pictures you didn't get set back a day. The whole set had to be cooled and repainted and then we had to start all over again. It was really terrifying—reality carried a little too far. Elizabeth and I had to drag ourselves out from under the timber. I grabbed poor Elizabeth by the hair and dragged her off the set so quick!

**SS:** Your scenes with the cat were wonderfully choreographed in the film. How well did you get along with your feline supporting actor?

**VP:** You know, I've done two or

three things with cats. And never say "a cat", because "a cat" does only one trick. And so you have "cats"—it sounds practically like the musical once you get through! On one picture, a television thing I did with a cat, we had nine of them in place of one. Because there was one cat who would lick you, one who would jump on your lap, and one who would jump on your shoulder. So TOMB OF LIGEIA was done with several cats. There's no such thing as training a cat—you just grab him by the tail and hope he'll jump. And he jumped! It was really kind of frightening, because they can open up their claws and really rip you to bits. But we got it done.

**SS:** In the past, you have expressed your feeling that Roger Corman's work as a director and producer was unappreciated in the 60s and 70s. Why do you think that was the case?

**VP:** Roger Corman's work at that time was unappreciated because, if you tried to do anything and make it pay, you were accused of being commercial. I think today they've found out that the goddamn pictures cost so much money you can't make it back. But Roger was making pictures in a hurry for very low budgets that



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**ABOVE:** The bad doctor (Vincent Price) prepares to make use of his patented acid-dispenser in 1971's *THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES*. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Still under the powerful influence of his dead wife, Verden Fell (Vincent Price) mistakes Rowena (Elizabeth Shepherd) for the wicked Ligeia in 1965's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*.

were very good films. Part of Roger's genius, along with his directorial genius, is the fact that he surrounded himself with incredibly talented people. I mean, to have Nick Roeg on camera for *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*—it's incredible! He's one of the great cameramen, besides later becoming a brilliant director. Arthur Grant, a top cameraman, shot *TOMB OF LIGEIA*. Roger somehow conned him into thinking that it was a great idea to do something fast! Roger's films were wonderfully done and marvelously produced. And, you know, they've become really sort of classic films. When they first came out, they were given short shrift, as it were. But now the critics all turn around and say how wonderful they are.

**SS:** *Corman's films were infamous for their tight shooting schedules. Did you find this a hindrance to your performance?*

**VP:** It's divine to work on such a tight schedule. There's no waste. The thing of sitting around on a set! I was talking to Tim Burton the other day. Tim is now three weeks behind schedule and ten billion dollars over budget [On the current *BATMAN RETURNS*—Ed.] One hears this, and I'm sure a lot of it is just due to a complete waste of time because these films are so big that they're unwieldy. They just don't move quickly. But you can do a picture in three weeks or four or ten months—it doesn't matter; it depends on how well organized it is. And Roger was very organized.

**SS:** *Working under such constraints, Corman must have expected his actors to know their scripts and craft well.*

**VP:** Roger absolutely depended on us as actors working on such a tight schedule. He had not only the whole burden of the production but that of being the director, too. He had a tremendous sort of discipline about telling the actors what he wanted them to do. Being on location, of course, we could discuss it afterward at meals and things like that. And you just concentrated and it's much more fun and productive to do it quickly than to take forever to do it.

**SS:** *Was there room for spontaneity in the Corman films?*

**VP:** You could improvise within the time limit you had. But, when you know you have limited time, you don't fool around. You don't

***"Bluebeard hangs all those ladies in a room. I wouldn't be caught dead doing something like that. You know, one should always treat the ladies nicely... torture them a little, but don't hang them up by their hair."***

have actors who come on the set and don't know their lines and then want to argue about it. To hell with them! You know, I say to hell with them right away from the beginning, anyway. I've worked too many of those. We worked very hard to get those pictures off the ground. It wasn't just love and fun. It was really hard work. We'd do 15 or 16 set-ups a day. If a company does 12 set-ups, they think they're good! Something like BATMAN or HOOK takes forever to complete. Maggie Smith, who's a great friend of mine, told me that on HOOK there was sometimes only one set-up a day. My God, that would be so exhausting!

**SS:** *Your passion for the visual arts is well known. Throughout your life, you have demonstrated that there is a rich heritage of the arts in this country. Do you think that your countrymen are finally coming around to that viewpoint?*

**VP:** I think they are beginning to get an idea, now, that America has something to offer to the arts. We have always had. I did a book once—a sort of treasury of American art—and in doing research, I was just overcome with the problems of the American artist and his struggle to be recognized. Mainly because we are such snobs in this country. We have a foreign policy in art like Bush's domestic policy—there's no domestic policy. I think the realization began with Jackson Pollock and some of those painters who shocked us into understanding that we were as creative and innovative as the Europeans. I think we've begun to have a feeling that maybe we have something to say that is unique. I'm a big fan of American art—a great admirer of the American artist and how he survives. But movies—there was a period when it had to be a French, German, or Japanese film to earn any sort of recognition. Now, we realize we had invented it. We are the people who know how to make movies.

**SS:** *It must be ironic, then, that so many people have mistaken you for a British actor.*

**VP:** Well, when you're born in St. Louis, Missouri, it's hard to be English!

**SS:** *How do your views on fine art relate to Edgar Allan Poe?*

**VP:** Poe is a typical example of the American artist whose influence in Europe was enormous. You know, Baudelaire and other writers, as well as some of the great painters like Manet, were very influenced

by Poe. So many of the visual artists illustrated "The Raven" or something else of his. Poe was an innovative man who invented the detective novel—who was really one of the great artists of all time. They understood in Europe, but people in this country didn't understand him because he was American. I think they do, now. You know, it was fun to work on the Poe pictures. But they finally got to the point where they'd take a picture and type it a bit by giving it a Poe title—even if it had nothing to do with his work whatsoever. THE CONQUEROR WORM was the most ridiculous title for WITCHFINDER GENERAL. It took me six months to find the Goddamn poem! But I knew it must be Edgar Allan Poe.

**SS:** *With your Poe-based characters, you had source material to utilize in preparing for the films. But the role of Dr. Anton Phibes was completely original and created with you in mind. As an actor, what did you draw upon to flesh out your performances in the two Phibes films?*

**VP:** Well, the Phibes films were a send-up of some of the things that I had done before. I could go back to what was the origin of them—the Poe series—and just make them a little bit ridiculous. It's like oper-

etta. Gilbert and Sullivan couldn't have existed if "serious" opera hadn't, because it's a take-off, a send-up of Grand Opera. Their operettas are hysterically funny, but divinely beautiful at the same time. With the Phibes pictures, there was no going to the source because there was no source except myself and Edgar Allan Poe. And, of course, working with Bob Fuest, who directed both THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES and DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN, was inspirational. He was one of the funniest men in the world, with a wild, mad sense of the ridiculous. Bob was quite different from Roger in that respect. Roger's sense of humor was like a guillotine. Bob was really a wickedly funny man and as inventive as they come. I mean, he came up with Phibes' mechanized orchestra, which was a wonderful idea. He was brilliant.

**SS:** *Speaking of operetta, you performed in RUDDIGORE in England and for the PBS Gilbert and Sullivan series. Was it an enjoyable experience?*

**VP:** I loved singing for RUDDIGORE. The whole cast was English except me. And, you know, the English do it so well. We did it outside of London and it was a killer! I was told I only had five days to prepare for the role. So, before I arrived, I worked like a dog to learn every word, every song, and every note. When I went to the first read-through, I knew every note, every tempo, and everything else.

**SS:** *Let's jump to your involvement with MYSTERY! Did you help in the decision to choose Diana Rigg as your replacement as series host?*

**VP:** I was very instrumental in suggesting Diana. Because I became sick and couldn't use my voice the way I wanted, I quit. The producers had a lot of ideas for a



**Director and admirer Tim Burton shares a quiet moment with Vincent Price on the set of EDWARD SCISSORHANDS (1990).**



**LEFT:** Dr. Anton Phibes (Vincent Price) croaks yet another victim (Alex Scott) in 1971's *THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES*. **RIGHT:** Price met wife-to-be Coral Browne when he permed her to death in 1973's *THEATRE OF BLOOD*. The likely lad on the left is Diana Rigg!

replacement, which they'd always run by me. Diana's name finally came up because of *THEATRE OF BLOOD*. You know, it's just my theory, but I do think the host should be a man. Well, particularly with Alistair Cooke as the host of *MASTERPIECE THEATRE*; you need a man to tell a story like that—to set it up. Other than that, you couldn't get anybody better than Diana. She's been successful at it.

**SS:** Recently, through your work with director Tim Burton, you have made it back to the big screen in *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS*. It is obvious that he understands your persona and treats you with great respect as an actor.

**VP:** Tim Burton has been so dear. There's never been an article about him in which he doesn't mention me. The beginning of our association came through the making of his wonderful little short about me. It's called *VINCENT*. I think it's available on videotape now. That film was the beginning of his career, in fact, so he's been very dear about my influence on his work and sense of humor. I think he's a brilliant young man.

**SS:** Do you have current or future acting plans—with or without Tim Burton?

**VP:** I am to do a walk-on in Tim's new picture, *BATMAN RETURNS*. Literally, a walk-on: I walk through a scene! I don't know what he has in mind. But that's about all I'm doing. It's simply because I'm 80 years old and there it is. Somebody offered me a television show the other day called *LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHTY*. I said you're out of your cotton-picking mind! Where are you going to wheel in the contestants? Boring. . . it's very boring to get old. Unless you have really robust health, which few people do, it's a trying time. To hell with the Golden Years!

**SS:** Within your horror-film career, you have played everything from an insane Spanish inquisitor to a gleefully mad doc-

tor who outwits the forces of "good". What is your reaction to therapists who claim that horror movies are detrimental to impressionable minds?

**VP:** You can prove them wrong by asking them what they read to their kids. In many cases, it's *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, which are more frightening than any picture I ever made. I mean, Rumpelstiltskin falls into a million pieces! Bluebeard hangs all those ladies in a room. I wouldn't be caught dead doing something like that. You know, one should always treat the ladies nicely. . . torture them a little, but don't hang them up by their hair. No, those types of accusations are ridiculous. They're just the result of somebody who wants something to talk about.

**SS:** You once said that the most important person you had ever known was your wife, Coral Browne. Many of her fans were deeply upset upon learning of her death last year.

**VP:** You know, Alan Bates just came over to say hello, which I thought was sweet. He's in town for just one day. He had a wonderful relationship with Coral through their work on *AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD*. I was very touched that he would come to see me. I miss her terribly. We did work together on several occasions—we met during the filming of *THEATRE OF BLOOD*; we did a Jean Anouilh play, *WALTZ OF THE TOREADORS*, and bits and pieces for television. She had an entirely different career than I did.

**SS:** You have made about 100 films. Do you have a favorite?

**VP:** I think *THEATRE OF BLOOD* is the best of the lot. You know, that incredible cast consisted of a group of actors who had all played Shakespeare many times—and I had done one Shakespearean play in my life [*RICHARD III* in 1953—Ed.]. And here I was playing the great Shakespearean ham of his time! And to be able

to sell it to them, my co-stars, meant that I could play it and have enough sense about it to be able to send it up a bit. I did eight Shakespearean parts in the film. I think that was the best feeling of achievement and satisfaction that I ever had from a film.

**SS:** You did not receive formal training as an actor. Would you consider yourself a "natural"?

**VP:** I didn't set out early in my life to be an actor. I studied art. I think I was a "natural" for my first theatrical part as Prince Albert opposite Helen Hayes in *VICTORIA REGINA*. Since I had lived quite a lot in Germany, I could speak German. Therefore, I could fake my character's accent. It also helped that the part called for someone who was six foot four, which I am, and had my looks and hair. Just everything worked out right for that role. But then, Miss Hayes made me go out during our month off every summer to learn my job. I'd go and play everything I could get my hands on, because the best way to act is to act.

**SS:** Besides your performance in *THEATRE OF BLOOD*, what do you feel is your best work?

**VP:** I believe my role as Oscar Wilde in the one man show *DIVERSIONS & DELIGHTS* was my other great achievement as an actor. It was really extraordinary. It was the only time ever in my whole career when I really, completely fell into the character. I would walk out on that stage and say "My name is Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wilde", and four minutes later I was not Vincent Price—which is a divine feeling. I was really able to escape into that character, into the wit and brilliance of the man.

**SS:** Back to your beliefs regarding the arts: What do you think about the current state of cultural affairs in this country?

*Continued on page 95*

# Memories of Ligeia

## An Interview with Elizabeth Shepherd by Michael Orlando Yaccarino

A versatile theatrical actress, Elizabeth Shepherd frequently appears in productions throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Her repertoire ranges from the classics of Shakespeare to the great works of Chekhov, Shaw, and Williams. Also, she is no stranger to film and television. Currently, she is appearing in *THE DREAMLAND* by John Roby and Raymond Storey at The Theatre of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. In this exclusive interview, the charming and direct actress recalls her memorable performance in *TOMB OF LIGEIA* with exceptional insight.

*Scarlet Street:* How were you chosen for the dual role of Ligeia and Rowena?

**Elizabeth Shepherd:** I first heard of *TOMB OF LIGEIA* from Paul Mayersburg, who was Roger Corman's assistant on the movie. I auditioned knowing nothing about Roger's reputation, nothing about Vincent Price's fame in the genre—but loving the Edgar Allan Poe story. When I was told it was a dual role, I presumed it would be mostly Ligeia and a little Rowena, as in Poe. Imagine my surprise on receiving the script! Incidentally, Paul Mayersburg—who, of course, went on to become a critic and commentator, as well as the writer of *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*—directed the second-unit shoot of the “honeymoon” montage, which was tacked on after principal photography, using doubles. Vincent and I did the voice-overs in post-production, and I thought the settings were stunning, but I never felt that our doubles quite captured our walk!

*SS: What was your initial reaction to the very different characters you were required to portray?*

**ES:** At first I felt indignant on Ligeia's behalf that she had necessarily become the “evil” one in this version of the story, and that we never see how exceptionally gifted and extraordinary a woman Poe imagined her to be—qualities which inspired the obsession and make Verden so susceptible to the spell of her will.

However, I became totally won over by the wonderfully spiritual, brave, and passionate woman who emerged as Rowena. Robert Towne and Roger had been at great pains to research the psychology behind the hypnotic spell, its source, its power, and its cure.

*SS: So, in the end, you were pleased with the conception of the characters...*

**ES:** The script makes powerful emotional sense, and Rowena is a great role—not to

*SS: Did the film require unusual preparation on your part?*

**ES:** Well, the one thing I had to learn especially for the movie was how to ride a horse sidesaddle. The wranglers who provided the horses and organized the hunting sequence taught me at their stables. My teacher, Dorothy, was also my double, although in the end I did all my own riding except for the hunt itself. There were three identical horses—one for the hunt and jumps, another which was lively and used for cantering into shot, and lastly a docile one for standing shots and close-ups. That was supposed to be the one I would ride most, being easy to handle. However, the obedient animal seemed to me far too lackluster for Rowena's taste and temperament, so I chose to manage the vivacious one instead. The scary part was the rearing of the horse at the tomb, and my fall.

*SS: Did this preparation help you in finding the character of Rowena?*

**ES:** Becoming a horsewoman myself was the key to knowing what it felt like to be Lady Rowena Tremaine of Tremaine. The role was satisfying to play because she develops so richly during the course of the story—from initial defiance and curiosity, to genuine sympathy and love, to joy, to puzzlement, fear, anger, terror, determination, and finally enormous courage to confront Ligeia and save the man they both love.

*SS: Of all the women in American International's Poe films, Rowena is certainly the most resourceful.*

**ES:** I am proud of her. As to how the film plays now—I had not seen the film for at least 18 years when it was screened as part of the film series at my son's boarding



*The luminous Elizabeth Shepherd made her American motion-picture debut—here, complete with cat scratches—in the dual role of Rowena/Ligeia in 1965's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*.*

mention the challenge of being the lurking Ligeia, too, with all her formidable charms. I prepared for the roles very seriously, and I think Vincent was pleased, perhaps a little surprised, to find his co-star so eager to rehearse our scenes and talk about our relationship!



*Trapped in the bell tower: the most riveting sequence from TOMB OF LIGEIA.*

school in Ojai, California, in the early 1980s. I was present to talk about the movie afterwards, and was anticipating with interest and some trepidation my own reaction, and that of a hall full of opinionated and discerning teenagers. They loved it. I was amazed to discover what a really good film it is, particularly in light of the way the so-called horror genre has developed, with all its gory violence. The film is full of Poe's own mystery and, most

important, imagination. Also, it is healthy to see the power of darkness convincingly exorcised by an equally compelling power of light and love. Nowadays, the dark side is usually infinitely more potent and attractive!

**SS:** *That's so true!*

**ES:** Another reason the film stands the test of time so well is that it is excellent storytelling. Instead of endless montage sequences and special effects to propel the

action and manipulate the audience, Corman relies on a solid script and then lets the characters speak for themselves.

**SS:** *How did you work with Corman to develop the role of Rowena?*

**ES:** Roger was actually rather preoccupied while we were filming *LIGEIA*, because his contract with AIP was ending and he was having problems with another film company about his deal for his next projects. We didn't discuss things too much once he had entrusted me with the role. Clear, straightforward, truthful, bold, alert—these are the qualities he wanted to see in Rowena.

**SS:** *Corman is well-known for keeping his shooting schedules very tight. Was that true of *LIGEIA*?*

**ES:** Yes, speed and efficiency were his hallmarks, but we had five whole weeks, which was a luxuriant schedule for a Corman movie. The first week was on location in Norfolk, filming at Castle Acre, which is a ruined abbey, beautifully kept by The National Trust. Five weeks meant that Corman could be, visually, more ambitious than usual, which certainly enhances the movie. But not a minute was wasted. I can remember arriving on location in time to start shooting the next day. We were all settling into the hotel when word came: "Roger says there's enough light to start now—be there as soon as possible!" Pandemonium! The hairstyle hadn't been decided, the dress didn't fit, and John Westbrook and I were desperately learning our lines in the car. It was the scene in which Rowena tells Christopher that she feels that Ligeia is haunting the abbey. Notice the unique hard-to! Fortunately, the scene looks good, but the sound quality was poor, so I had the chance to add a more confident vocal quality to the scene in post-sync.

**SS:** *Do any similar frenzied experiences come to mind?*

**ES:** Yes, indeed! In fact, it was the very last shot of the film, too, which was hectic. It was the close-up of Ligeia's face in the coffin when her eyes fly open and stare. A crucial shot. And we only had a short time to catch it before losing light, having to wrap forever. The sun was directly in my eyes. I could not hold them open without blinking or watering. But I had to. I can remember pressing my arms and legs so hard against the sides of the coffin that they hurt more than my eyes did, and just willing myself to widen my eyes. I guess that was Ligeia herself at work. These pressures of time certainly focused concentration and kept the energy high.

**SS:** *With the scheduling demands, there could not have been many chances for second takes?*

**ES:** Well, the only time I sensed Roger being relentless was in the sequence in which Rowena is releasing Verden from the spell, in the "Ligeia turret" near the



**ABOVE:** Verden Fell (Vincent Price) meets second wife Rowena (Elizabeth Shepherd) when her temperamental horse deposits her at the grave of first wife Ligeia. Here, Fell tends to Rowena's injured ankle with the help of servant Kenrick (Oliver Johnston). **NEXT PAGE:** Vincent Price and Elizabeth Shepherd in *TOMB OF LIGEIA*'s soul-snatching dénouement.

*"... I knelt on the floor face to face with this poor cat who was looking at me as if to say, 'I wish this was over, I know I look absolutely ridiculous wearing these dark glasses tied to my nose. . . !' "*

end. I was standing looking up at Vincent, so close to that blazing brazier at my back that I was not only boiling hot, I was scorching! I had to stop. But the set-up was exactly what Roger wanted. "Never mind, keep going," he said. So I did. It certainly added to the intensity of the situation.

**SS:** Many feel that, of the AIP films, *LIGEIA* is closest to Poe. Have you ever seen the other films in the series?

**ES:** I have seen the other films, and I agree with those who say *LIGEIA* is the most substantial and truest to Poe. Although the story was enhanced and the powers of mesmerism rather than the fumes of opium are emphasized, the spirit and power and literacy of Poe is all there. *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* came out while we were shooting, and I was amused to see our very same fire irons and the very same chandelier in that film, too—props from the Corman repertory company!

**SS:** What are your memories of your co-star, Vincent Price?

**ES:** Aside from having the most eloquent voice on earth, he has enormous personal charm and charisma. I loved working with Vincent Price; he made everything seem easy. He is such a superb actor, and extraordinarily generous. As I mentioned earlier, he was very open to working on our scenes together, which certainly put me at ease. I remember watching him create that moment at Ligeia's funeral when he reads from Glanville,

and the priest says, "Blasphemy!", and Verden snaps the book closed in his face and declares, "Benediction!". It is daring, it is full of panache and utterly believable—passion and high style combined. But, I must say, for all of his intensity in the film, off-screen he had a wickedly witty sense of humor. He kept us laughing. **SS:** Vincent Price had a few amusing comments concerning your feline co-star.

**ES:** Oh, what vivid memories I have of that cat! Actually, there were several identical black cats, and the most talented of all was the amateur cat, borrowed from an elderly woman in Norfolk: her own pet, and a naturally accomplished actor. When this cat glared at me from Ligeia's tombstone I felt really threatened. We played well together. But there's a sad story: you remember the scene at Ligeia's funeral when the cat jumps onto the coffin and Verden brushes it aside? Well, the cat jumped, Vincent swiped it, the cat leapt off, ran away, and was never seen again. It was tragic.

We broke filming and searched, but the cat was nowhere to be found. I do hope she came home eventually—I have often wondered.

**SS:** So, the trained cats left something to be desired?

**ES:** The professional cats had far less character. Sometimes it felt as if Rowena was menacing the cat instead of otherwise. I remember laughing as I knelt on the floor face to face with this poor cat who was looking at me as if to say, "I wish this was over, I know I look absolutely ridiculous wearing these dark glasses tied to my nose...!" One of my most bizarre experiences as an actor was having a cat repeatedly thrown at my face. It was a wonder I did not get scratched for real! The screen scratch was a prop cat's paw applied to my cheek in close-up with "blood" in the claws.

**SS:** Was there anything in the film, not originally planned, that you contributed?

**ES:** Visually, my contribution was the red riding habit. When I was shown the wardrobe, the beige costume, which I wear when I ride over to visit the abbey and have my second encounter with Verden, was intended for the hunting sequence, also. I felt strongly that it was too subdued as an introduction to a woman of Rowena's spirit. First impressions are important. So I persuaded Roger to have the hunting red made for me. I'm glad he agreed; I think it is effective. Also, in the hypnotism scene, the song I sing, "I have a bonnet trimmed with blue", was in the script, but the transformation from Rowena to Ligeia

Continued on page 95



# MURDER, SHE SAYS

A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH JOAN HICKSON

by SCOT D. RYERSSON

Joan Hickson is one of Britain's most distinguished character actresses. In a career spanning more than 60 years, she has achieved success in theatre, film, and television. In 1979 she won a Tony award for her performance in Alan Ackbourn's *BEDROOM FARCE*. Miss Hickson has also appeared in such films as *MURDER, SHE SAID* (1962, in a minor role opposite Margaret Rutherford's Miss Marple), *THEATRE OF BLOOD* (1973), and *YANKS* (1979). She has gained worldwide fame for her portrayal of Agatha Christie's Miss Jane Marple. Critics and viewers alike have hailed her characterization of the spinster sleuth as the definitive one. In 1987, Mill Hickson received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her work on the BBC Marple series. Joan Hickson lives in a picturesque village in Essex, England.



Joan Hickson as herself and (BOTTOM LEFT) as Miss Jane Marple.

*Scarlet Street:* Is it true that you once knew Agatha Christie?

**Joan Hickson:** Long ago, I believe it was in the 1940s, I was in a play by Agatha Christie called *APPOINTMENT*

*WITH DEATH* and we got to know each other. One day, she ended a letter that she had sent me by saying, "And I hope one day that you will play my Miss Marple." You know, I thought no more of it until

we found that letter not long ago. So I do hope that she would have been pleased with what I have tried to do.

**SS:** How do you prepare for the role?

**JH:** Well, I am afraid that I may disappoint you as an actress! All I do is learn the lines, change my clothes, and go on the set and work.

**SS:** Has playing Miss Marple changed your life in any way?

**JH:** Miss Marple has only affected my life in my enormous appreciation of her success. You know, the series has gone all over the world—I have even had a fan letter from Moscow.

**SS:** What aspects of the character interest you most?

**JH:** She is an admirable lady—very sen-

sible, upright, and nothing on Earth would ever shock her. Since she lives in a village, she knows it all and she is very fond of justice.

**SS:** Do you find that friends sometimes think of you as the character since the series began?

**JH:** Living in a village as I do, none of my friends would ever dream of associating me with Miss M. She is just another part of the very many that I have been lucky enough to have been asked to play—and I certainly don't think of her at all in between [episodes].

**SS:** How do you spend your time when not acting?

**JH:** Well, there is quite a lot to do always, just being a housewife, and I like to keep up very much with my family and grandchildren. My husband and I used to sail quite a lot, especially on my father-in-law's boat—he was T. Harrison Butler, a well-known designer of yachts.

**SS:** What does the future hold for Miss Marple?

**JH:** We have completed *THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS*, which was shown here last Christmas. Next we film the last one we can play: *THE MIRROR CRACK'D*.

**SS:** Are there any final thoughts that you'd like to add regarding the series?

**JH:** I must say that the series has been a great joy to all of us in every department. No stardom, no hierarchy—just all of us in them together and having great fun. It has been a happy experience indeed.



# SHE SNOOPS TO CONQUER

## MISS MARPLE RETURNS IN "THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS"

by SCOT D. RYERSSON

"Miss Marple thought to herself, 'This isn't a real hall. This is only cardboard and canvas and wood. This is a stage scene. . . illusion. . . in the eyes of the audience. . . they do it with mirrors. . .'"

In 1952, while on an expedition to the Middle East with her archaeologist husband, Agatha Christie wrote *They Do It with Mirrors*. It was the fifth novel to feature her spinster sleuth, Miss Jane Marple (the mystery would be published in the United States as *Murder with Mirrors*, a title completely missing the point, as the book is rife with deceptions and conjuring tricks).

Dame Agatha always remained a little vague concerning the origins of Miss Marple: "Miss Marple insinuated herself so quietly into my life that I hardly noticed her arrival." Christie often hinted that the genteel lady could have been a combination of the nosy, middle-aged character of Caroline Sheppard from her famous 1926 novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* and her own paternal grandmother. "I endowed Miss Marple with something of Grannie's powers of prophecy. There was no unkindness in Miss Marple, she just did not trust people. She [Christie's grandmother] always expected the worst of everyone and everything, and was, with almost frightening accuracy, usually proved right."

The author did reveal, however, that Miss Marple's name was taken from Marple Hall, a spectacular, supposedly haunted house in Cheshire, England, of which Christie was very fond.

Jane Marple made her debut in *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930). In *An Autobiography* (1977), Christie reminisced on Marple's debut: "I cannot remember where, when, or how I wrote it, why I came to write it, or even what suggested to me that I should select a new character to act as the sleuth in the story. Certainly at the time I had no intention of continuing her for the rest of my life. I did not know that she was to become a rival for Hercule Poirot." Miss Marple went on to star in 12 novels and 19 short stories.

Scot D. Ryerson is an award-winning illustrator who has lived and worked in Sydney, Los Angeles, London, and Toronto. He currently resides in the New York area and is a devout Christieophile.



Miss Marple (Joan Hickson) takes a whodunnit break.

*They Do It with Mirrors* revolves around Miss Marple's visit with her childhood friend, Carrie Louise Serrocold. Carrie Louise and her husband Lewis have turned their large estate, Stonygates, into a rehabilitation home for juvenile-delinquent boys. However, as Miss Marple discovers, none of the young criminals is nearly as dangerous as the seven family members surrounding the gulleless Carrie Louise—one of whom may be slowly poisoning her.

Stonygates' serenity is soon further shattered by a very unpleasant love triangle, an attempted shooting, three murders, and a killer with a talent for being in two places at the same time.

The book was first brought to the screen as *MURDER WITH*

*MIRRORS* in 1985 by CBS Television, with Helen Hayes as Miss Marple. The results were less than noteworthy. Miss Hayes (whose British accent comes and goes throughout the film) was supported by a "name" cast that included John Mills, Dorothy Tutin, *RUMPOLE*'s Leo McKern, and, as Carrie Louise, an obviously ill and cantankerous Bette Davis. Unfortunately, with a lack luster, updated script by George Eckstein and the plodding direction of Dick Lowery, Christie's intriguing mystery became yet another lukewarm production in which good talent was wasted.

In 1991, BBC-TV dusted off the novel for their excellent *MISS MARPLE* series, with the superlative Joan Hickson again assaying the role of the elderly detective. The distinguished cast includes veteran actors Joss Ackland and Faith Brooke, as well as Jean Simmons in a most welcome appearance as Carrie Louise. Ms. Simmons' career had

previously touched upon the mysterious with her portrayal of Elizabeth Collins-Stoddard in NBC's ill-fated resurrection of *DARK SHADOWS* (1991) and her Emmy Award winning performance in CBS's *MURDER SHE WROTE* (1990). The fine cast is rounded out by Neal Swettenham as the unbalanced Edgar Lawson, and David Horovitch returns as Miss Marple's friendly nemesis Inspector Slack (replacing the novel's Inspector Curry).

As in the series' previous dramatizations, impeccable care has been taken in every facet of production, from the faithful and literate adaptation by T.R. Bowen to Norman Stone's well-paced direction. The atmospheric cinematography by John Walker perfectly captures the deliberate theatricality of the story, especially

in its use of camera angles and shadows (which is, in fact, a clue to solving this Christie puzzle). Special note should be taken of the beautiful score by Ken Howard and Alan Blaikley, who have graced the entire series with their memorable melodies.

A highlight to *THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS* is a nostalgically touching and effective framing device, which is original to the screenplay. The film begins and ends with the now-elderly trio of friends—Miss Marple, Carrie Louise, and Carrie Louise's sister, Ruth—silently viewing an old home movie of themselves on holiday in Italy in their more youthful and innocent days.

The most unforgettable aspect of this and all of the Marple telefilms is Joan Hickson. There is never a single moment in her quietly knowing performance as the spinsterish sleuth in which we doubt her portrayal to be the definitive embodiment of Christie's creation. John Leonard's *New York* magazine review of the series sums it up best: "Miss Marple—except when she's played by Helen Hayes, who did her cute—is scary. Joan Hickson isn't cute. She is unforgiving. She assigns blame. In her book, we are personally accountable. She is everything a Marple ought to be . . . Nothing escapes her eyes and her needles. . . She believes in evil: It has always been, it will continue to be, and she pursues it in sensible shoes."

*THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS* will have its American premiere—sadly, in edited form—on the Arts and Entertainment Network in September.



Murder pays a call on Carrie Louise (Jean Simmons) and her latest husband (Joss Ackland). Miss Marple (Joan Hickson) is, naturally, not far behind.

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# Former Wild Child

## an interview with

# JOHN MOULDER-BROWN

### by Jim Knüsch

In the early 70s John Moulder-Brown made his mark in horror films with starring roles in **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**, in which he played the young hero, and **THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED**, in which he chopped up some schoolgirls and pieced them together. In the critically-acclaimed **DEEP END**, he was Mike, a sexually disturbed teenager who murders the girl of his dreams in a half-filled swimming pool. In **KING, QUEEN, KNAVE**, the actor had a memorable encounter with Gina Lollobrigida—who also wound up dead—and, in **LUDWIG**, he portrayed the mad brother of the crazed titular King. Recently, he's **RUMPLESTILTSKIN** and the concerned—and, Agatha Christie's **SLEEPING MURDER**. Last up with John Moulder-Brown in London for this exclusive two-part interview.

*Scarlet Street: First things first: how did you become an actor?*

**John Moulder-Brown:** My parents split up when I was four. My mother wanted me to go to boarding school; my father wanted me to stay with him. He sent me to a private school, which was literally just around the corner from where we lived. They had a strong concentration on drama and, as a result of that, I fell into acting. My father had an army background. He was a major, but had always wanted to be an actor. Through the school, I worked as a child actor.

*SS: Your first professional appearance was as...*

**JMB:** The first film I made was **ROOM AT THE TOP**, with Laurence Harvey. I played the little boy—when Harvey is beaten up and lying at a bomb site, I think, there are children playing around him. One little boy is playing with a toy car, and pushes the car toward him and looks rather sheepish. That was my debut as a film actor. I remember, at that age, being very impressed by the trickery of film, and the fact that films were a telling of the truth, but through lies. Pushing the car toward him, the car wouldn't wheel properly. They attached a thin piece of wire, so that when I pushed it, it was pulled. And that made an enormous impression on me. I don't know



why, but I remember thinking this really is to do with telling people lies.

*SS: ROOM AT THE TOP was made in...*

**JMB:** I was born in 1953, so I suppose that must have been 1957 or something like that. [It was 1959.—Ed.] It was a wonderful film. But to go into my adult career, my start as an adult actor, I did a film for American television, **HEIDI**, with Sir Michael Redgrave, Maximilian Schell, Jean Simmons, and Jenny Edwards, who is the daughter of Blake Edwards. I played the geizenzpater, the goat boy who befriends Heidi in the mountains. Maximilian Schell was trying to direct and produce his own film called **FIRST LOVE**, and at that time hadn't gotten the money together. I was 14. By the time he got the money together, we met again in Spain, where I was doing **THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED** with Lilli Palmer, and he was doing a swashbuckling thing within the same studios. Of course, I'd developed into an adolescent as opposed to a young teenage boy, and he said, "I'm coming to London to look for the boy to star in **FIRST LOVE**. Let's meet when I get there." I think he'd auditioned some 300 boys throughout Europe. He'd looked in Germany and Switzerland, and I came to a general audition and was asked to do a piece. Well, I couldn't for the life of me



**PREVIOUS PAGE:** John Moulder-Brown in *FIRST LOVE* (1970). **THIS PAGE:** four scenes from *DEEP END* (1970). **TOP LEFT:** A bathhouse patron (Diana Dors) fulfills her sexual fantasies with Mike (John Moulder-Brown). **TOP RIGHT:** Mike repairs an unlikely murder weapon: the lamps that hang above the swimming pool. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Mike searches through bags of snow for a missing ring. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** After a failed attempt at lovemaking, Mike swings the lowered lamps at Susan (Jane Asher), killing her as she tries to climb out of the pool.

remember any of my pieces. So I did a kind of improvisation, and, as a result of that, he gave me the part. That was really the beginning of my adult career.

**SS:** Another early appearance came in the movie *DEEP END*. In his *Filmgoer's Companion*, the late Leslie Halliwell lists your birth date as 1945, which would make you 25 at the time you played 15-year-old Mike. You're not one of those actors who lies about his age, are you?

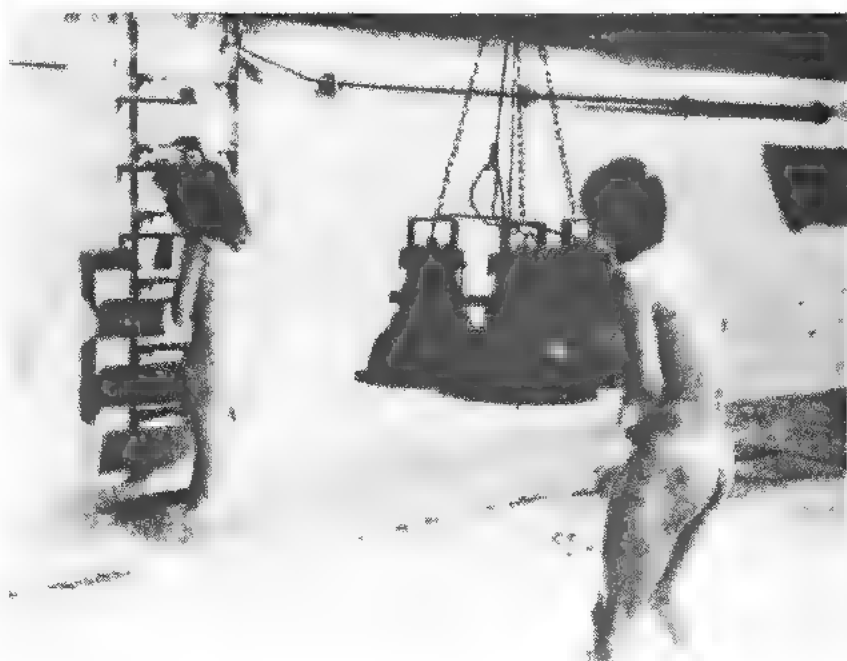
**JMB:** No, certainly not. I never lie professionally. Sometimes I lie personally. (Laughs) No, I made *DEEP END* at the

age of 17. I'd done *FIRST LOVE* for Maximilian Schell, which had a very wide artistic acclaim, although it wasn't a box office success. As a result of *FIRST LOVE*, the producers of *DEEP END* suggested I play Michael, who in fact was 17 in the film. I'd done a film test; in fact, I'd met Jerzy Skolimowski, who directed *DEEP END*. At that time, I was a terribly sophisticated, cigarette-smoking, rather suave, attempting at cool, young man. And when we met, he didn't like me at all. He said I was entirely wrong for the part; I didn't really have the quality that he was

looking for. The producers insisted that I test, and when I did it was entirely different; he liked me immediately. So it was a direct result of doing *HEIDI*, which led to *FIRST LOVE* and, as a result of that, to *DEEP END*. That's how careers go, I think. It's a matter of fortune and chance.

**SS:** What was it like to work with Jerzy Skolimowski on *DEEP END*?

**JMB:** Well, Skolimowski was marvelous. I'd worked right from childhood, so I was almost a professional by the time I arrived at *DEEP END*. The thing that happened whilst doing *FIRST LOVE* was that



Maximillian stripped down, really, everything I'd learned through drama school, and taught me a whole new way of film acting, which was very much allowing things to happen, as opposed to contriving them. Maximillian was a great trickster himself, a prankster, and one of the things he used to do would be to film the rehearsals. The actors would be unaware, but the camera would be rolling. That, also, was an indication to me of what film acting was about. It was a lack of self-consciousness. So *FIRST LOVE* was marvelous. Skolimowski I was also lucky with, because it wasn't like making films. The script wasn't finalized. None of us knew what the ending was going to be. And we weren't held to dialogue. Scenes were literally improvised within the framework, within the structure of the scene. The camera was very unobtrusive. One of the most difficult things for actors, of course, is the repetition of scenes, whereby you do a scene in master, you do it in medium, and then you do it in close. Performances change; you have to bring it down when you're doing things in close-up. Skoh had a genius for allowing the actor to be unaware of the camera. The most important thing to him was the actors, and everything was geared toward them.

**SS:** As you worked with Skolimowski again on *KING, QUEEN, KNAVE*, are we correct in thinking the working relationship was a good one?

**JMB:** It was an excellent one. At the time of *DEEP END*, Skoli spoke English, but—it wasn't a pidgin English; that would be too insulting—but it was a halting, stuttering English. We immediately had a rapport. Again, you find yourself playing a character with a professional who allows you the license of believing that you are creating your ideas, but who in fact is implanting those ideas. *DEEP END* was a relatively small film, and had an enormous success. What went slightly wrong with *KING, QUEEN, KNAVE*, with David Niven and Gina Lollobrigida, was that it had an enormous budget; there were really no restraints. In a situation with no restraints, we tend to go a little wild, and although I personally love *KING, QUEEN, KNAVE*—to me it's a glorious film—it didn't have commercial success. I don't think it had an artistic success, either.

**SS:** In *DEEP END*, Mike progresses from being a rather shy, likeable boy to one who is deeply, sexually troubled, and capable of killing. Did you find it difficult to show this progression?

**JMB:** No, I think that's an innate quality we all have. I think we are all capable of that passion, the ability to kill. Mike's killing was not a calculated thing. It came out of a sexual inadequacy, and a need not to feel rejected. Well, I don't think there's a man alive who hasn't gone through adolescence feeling that. The bad luck, for

Mike, was that the circumstance existed within which he could kill. No, he was a very easy character for me. That explosive anger, I think, is within all of us. It's just a matter of how we temper and control it.

**SS:** Jane Asher, whom many dismissed as merely Paul McCartney's girlfriend, is very good in *DEEP END*.

**JMB:** She was wonderful. She'd just come to the end of her affair with McCartney, within the past year or so. I felt very physically attracted towards her.

**SS:** She was an attractive girl.

**JMB:** And is now an attractive woman. Working with her was lovely, adorable; we communicated very well. I suppose it was the feeling we had about each other that made the film work so well.

**SS:** Former sex symbol Diana Dors shared one of *DEEP END*'s more memorable scenes with you, playing an overweight bathhouse client who indulges her sexual fantasies with Mike. Was the scene difficult to do?

**JMB:** She made it very easy. She was a consummate professional. She came in to do a cameo role, which is always difficult because you've got a whole group of people who know each other and have their little in-jokes.

**SS:** Diana Dors was one of those blonde...

**JMB:** Bombshells; yes, that's right. *DEEP END* was part of her letting go of that. I met her five minutes before we started rehearsals. We were filming in Munich, so she'd arrived and we were in the bathhouse that they'd taken over and redecorated. We rehearsed, which was a low tempo, downbeat thing, and Skolimowski said, "So, do we film this?" And she wanted to film it and I was quite happy to film it, so we did a scene that was far removed from anything we had rehearsed.

**SS:** But it fit the story line?

**JMB:** Very much so. It's a scene whereby she reaches an orgasm with the young boy by talking about football. Particularly Georgie Best. The scene starts by her saying, "Do you like football?" "Yes, I do like football." "Who's your favorite?" "Oh, Georgie Best is my favorite." Then she starts to caress herself and draw the boy to her. The boy tries to struggle away, and it's a big wrestle with her holding on, pulling his hair, pulling him down between her legs, and all the time talking about Georgie about to score, Georgie about to get the ball in. It's the analogy between the sex act and scoring a goal. Eventually she reaches orgasm and discards the boy, hav-



David Niven played John Moulder-Brown's loving uncle in *KING, QUEEN, KNAVE* (1972), but Moulder-Brown spent most of his screen time loving his aunt.

© 1974 David L. Woper and Marant Films



**ABOVE AND BELOW RIGHT:** Gina Lollobrigida didn't think John Moulder-Brown measured up to such screen lovers as Frank Sinatra and Burt Lancaster, but that didn't stop her from engaging in some pretty robust sex scenes with the young actor.

ing made use of him. It was a marvelous scene! Afterwards I said to her, "My God! It was nothing like rehearsal." And she said, "Never give your all in rehearsal." (Laughs)

**SS:** *DEEP END* is very much a part of the sexual revolution of the late 60s and 70s. Was it difficult, as a young actor, to play numerous sex and nude scenes?

**JMB:** It wasn't difficult because it was in the context of the film. My nude scenes have changed, of course; the nude scenes I do now are very different from the nude scenes I did in *DEEP END*. I'm playing an adult, now, whereas at that time I was playing a rather shy, inhibited young boy. As an actor, of course, you always expose yourself, and it's your degree of security as to how far you can expose yourself within any production. There's one scene that wasn't shown in the film; it was a different ending. The end of the film has the boy kill the girl. The water comes into the pool and we leave the two of them, him holding the dead body and floating with it. Two naked bodies. That was the actual ending. The alternative ending was that, after killing her, the boy rushes out of the pool naked, jumps into her car, and crashes the car and kills himself. That scene was particularly difficult, because it was filmed in a sort of rough East End area of London. We'd been filming during the day, and, of course, you gather a crowd around. During the day we had an enormous crowd, about two or three hundred people, and so, in order to disperse

them, everyone got into their vans and drove off and had supper. Then drove back again. The scene was this: I would appear from around the corner, running naked, jump into the car, drive the car across a deserted patch of ground, and crash the car into the wall. It was quite a long run, about 200 yards. We set everything up, and there weren't many people there, but while setting up the crowd started to gather again. So we rehearsed it. I rehearsed it in a dressing gown. I came 'round the corner, ran to the car, jumped in, didn't do the driving. Then the robe came off. They greased the whole of my body, 'cause I was meant to be coming out of the pool: I was covered in a glistening grease. I was surrounded by make-up and wardrobe people, and then I went whizzing 'round the corner, and, of course, a great shout went up as this nude figure came whizzing 'round.

Thank God I was running. I didn't have to stop and linger, and it was certainly an incentive to get into the car as quickly as possible. (Laughs) I'll never forget that shout going up—not abusive by any means, but remarks shouted at me as I went running completely naked through the streets of London. I guess, in a way, that was more difficult than the intimate sex scenes.

**SS:** *It's different nowadays.*

**JMB:** That's right. You see it happening on cricket fields nowadays!

**SS:** *KING, QUEEN, KNAVE*, based on the novel by Vladimir Nabokov, had little if any play in the States. What can you tell us about it?

**JMB:** It was a black comedy. The original casting was David Niven and Sophia Loren. For some reason they couldn't get Loren, so we had Gina Lollobrigida. The story has a boy, orphaned as the result of an accident in which both his parents died, going to live with his uncle and aunt, Niven and Lollobrigida. He has an affair with the aunt. The uncle's an industrialist and a very wealthy man, and they plot to murder him. Of course, it all goes wrong; the aunt is killed and the boy takes over from the uncle, who is bereft and mortified by the death of his wife. The last scene has the boy, having taken complete control, tearing up the love letters from the aunt.

**SS:** *So the boy wins out over everyone.*

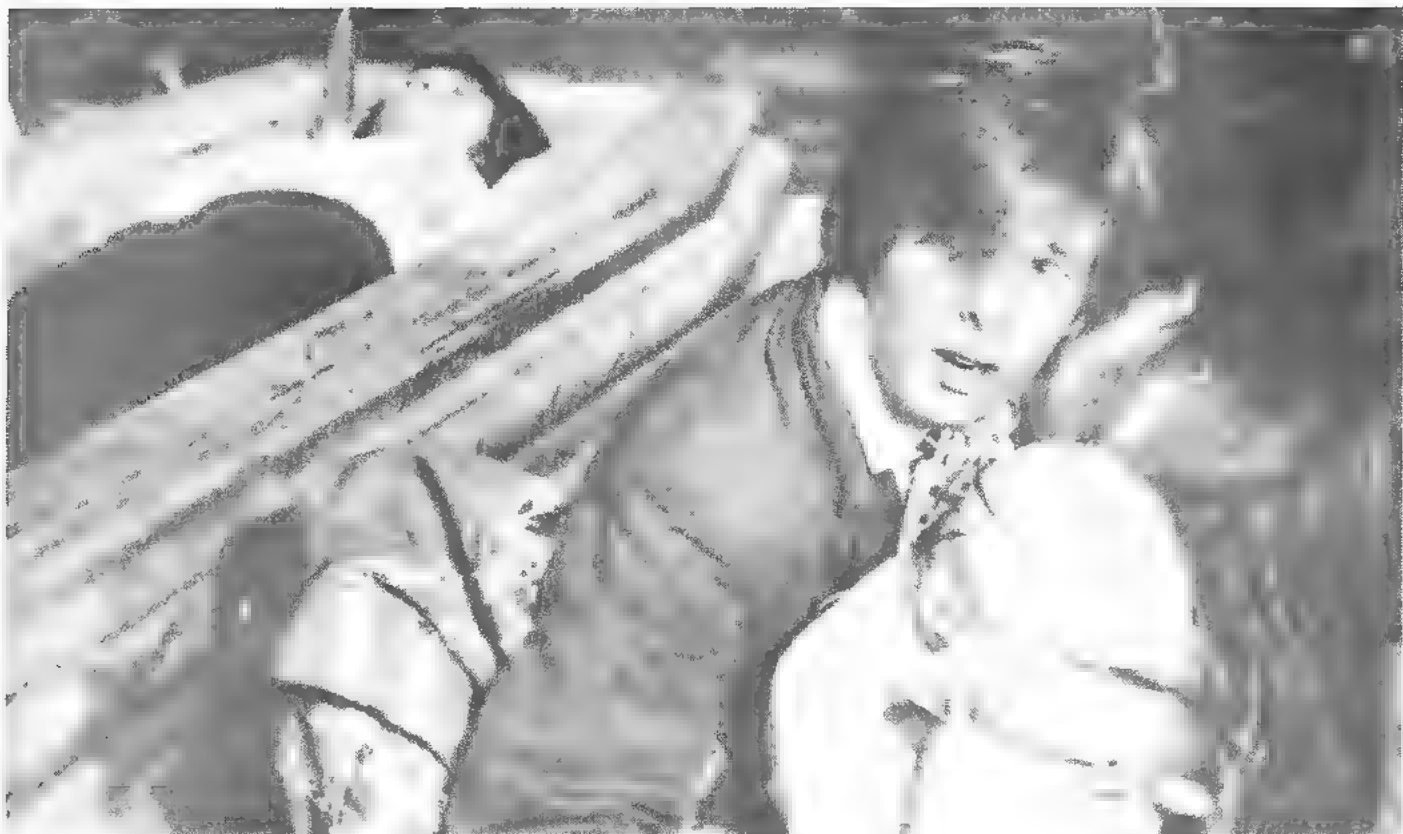
**JMB:** Well, the subplot is that the boy, who's staying in a rooming house, lives next to a mad professor who's invented a material akin to skin. He tries to develop it through his connection with the boy, so he's making mannequins that move and look like real people.

**SS:** *Cybernetic organisms?*

**JMB:** That's right. The aunt, during her affair with the boy, visits him constantly, and the mad professor decides to model his prototype on the aunt. So when the boy has successfully taken over and is destroying the evidence, the professor arrives with the robot aunt, and the end is open as to whether all will come out or not. Black comedy. The character I played progressed through the film; he starts with



Photo courtesy of Campfire Video



*Seldom cast as a hero in the early phase of his career, John Moulder-Brown fought off an entire travelling show of the undead in Hammer's VAMPIRE CIRCUS (1971). Pictured with Moulder-Brown: Robert Tayman and Lynne Frederick.*

round pebble glasses, spots, and a short cropped haircut. I had loosely based the character on Jerry Lewis. Completely inept; if he went to get up from the table, he knocked the table over.

**SS:** A nerd.

**JMB:** Exactly. And then, gradually, he progresses into a rather suave young man. We started filming in the South of France. Niven, of course, was marvelous and I thank God for him. Lollobrigida wasn't so easy. When we first met, a couple of days before filming, it was fine. On the first day of filming, she was suddenly confronted with this extraordinary person with thick pebble glasses to the degree that I couldn't see out of them, with hair cut in a very strange fashion, and pimples. She hated it. She loathed the idea of having a screen lover that, to her, looked like Pinocchio. She was so shocked that it threw her completely off balance; I think it changed her whole approach to the film, which was, in a way, to our benefit. She was constantly saying, "How can I be seen making love to this idiot boy?" And she would name the people she'd had screen affairs with, so it was "Lancaster and Sinatra this" and "Lancaster and Sinatra that"! Niven, who was a wonderful character and full of mar-

velous stories, treated the whole thing as a joke. He'd throw in remarks like, "Well, it's just as well we're not doing something serious, like crossing the road." It was a wonderful contrast, with both of them very much stars, both of them wonderful talents, and yet approaching it from a completely different angle.

**SS:** It's just that Niven knew how to have fun with it.

**JMB:** It was fascinating to watch the politics involved. She had veto power; she could block any scenes that she didn't like. What happened, of course, was there grew a situation between "her" and "us". It gave me, in a way, license for my character to behave in the most extraordinary fashion. We'd do scenes and Skoli would say to me, "Look, just do something that's slightly off when we're filming," so when we came to film I'd suddenly grab her breast and start squeezing it. She'd just continue with the scene; she didn't quite know what was going on. One particular scene, when she arrives at my room, was meant to be a passionate lovemaking scene: she arrives and takes off her clothes and we make love. Unusually for a set, we were filming within four walls. Normally on a set you lose two walls so the camera can move around, and then you put the walls back for the other angles. In this scene it was a completely enclosed area, so it was just the two of us in the room. I was

lying in bed and she took her clothes off; she was very light, a very tiny, diminutive figure. I grabbed her; we rolled on the bed; the mattress came off and we rolled onto the floor. There was a rocking chair in the room, and I took her onto the rocking chair. We rocked backwards and for wards and she was becoming slightly anxious and hysterical. There was a table there; it was a running gag that you could take out a little spring and the table would go up and down with a kind of creaking, cranking noise. I placed her face down over this table as if I was making love from behind. Well, at that point, she became hysterical, and started screaming "Basta! Basta!"

**SS:** Basta being Italian for "enough"...

**JMB:** Well, I knew I couldn't let go, 'cause if I let go she'd probably beat the living daylights out of me, so every time she said "Basta" I said "Faster". Eventually I let go of her and hid behind the mattress. She wrecked the whole set; she threw everything within reach, and disappeared from the set and refused to come back. She did come back the following day, but she vetoed the scene.

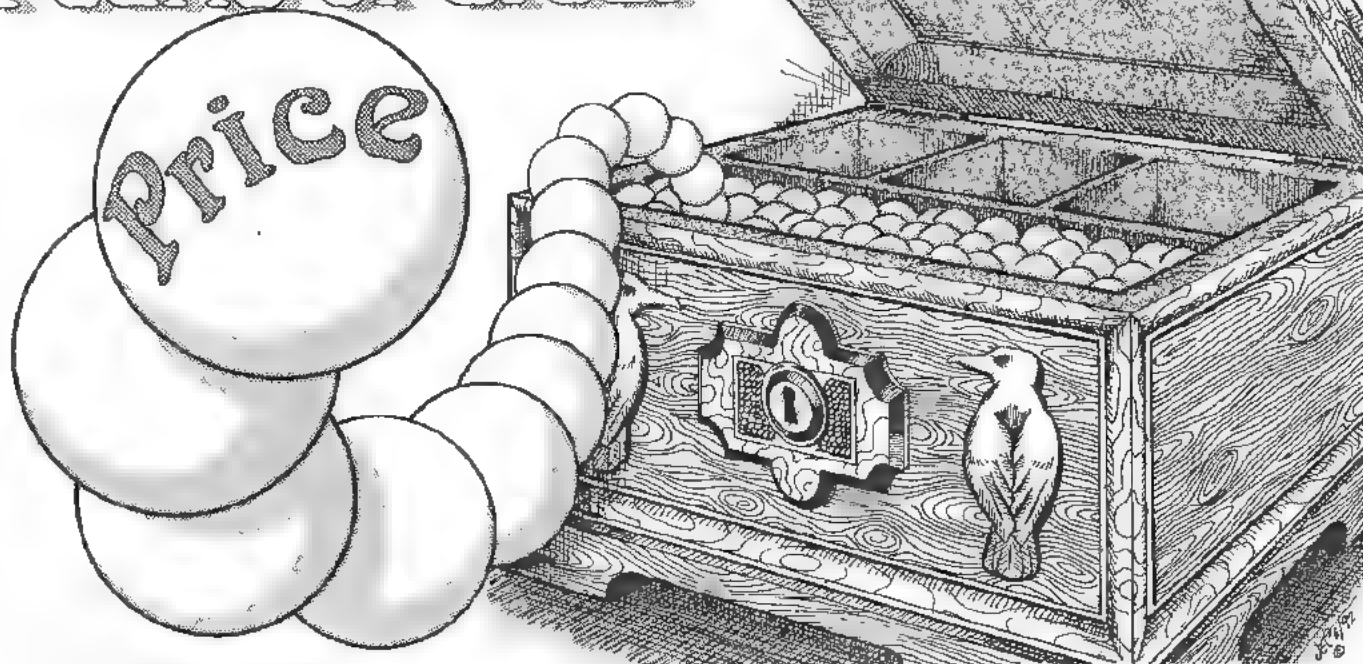
**SS:** Does it exist somewhere?

**JMB:** It must, because we watched it in rushes and had a great hoot about it. She's an extraordinary character.

*Jim Knüsch is a film historian and freelance writer. He is a frequent contributor to Scarlet Street.*

*Continued on page 96*

## Pearls of Great



# House of Wax

The quintessential Vincent Price horror movie, *HOUSE OF WAX* was released at a time when the star's career was flagging. Price's 20th Century Fox contract, which had provided him with steady work in "A" movies during the war years, expired ironically with his triumph in *DRAGONWYCK* (1946). The film's box-office performance was disappointing, and the actor couldn't parlay his excellent reviews into better roles; on the contrary, what immediately followed was an unsatisfactory period of free-lancing in mostly indifferent movies. With method actors such as Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift fast becoming the rage, Price, who prided himself on his suave theatrical bearing, began to feel out of step with Hollywood. Abruptly shifting gears, the actor tried his hand as a comedic ham in *CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR* (1950) and *HIS KIND OF WOMAN* (1951), but his new image didn't catch on with producers.

Landing the lead in *HOUSE OF WAX* couldn't have come soon enough for Price, reestablishing him as a villain and paving the way for many horror roles to come. The actor hadn't appeared in a horror movie since *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* in 1940 and, starting afresh, he delivers a performance eschewing self-parody. Here he plays Henry Jarrod, an artist who chooses wax as his medium of expression, sculpting life size figures of famous characters from history.

When his business partner (Roy Roberts) decides to torch the unprofitable wax museum for the insurance money—with Jarrod still in it—the artist emerges from the ashes crippled and horribly disfigured. It isn't long before the "House of Wax" is

back in business with the now-loco Jarrod fashioning statues from cadavers dipped in bubbling wax.

*HOUSE OF WAX* can be interpreted as a cautionary tract of how innocent, well-intentioned artists are trampled in the name of greed, but there wasn't anything skittish about Warner Brothers' handling of the film. Shooting in the much ballyhooed "natural vision" 3-D process, the studio went to ungodly lengths to exploit



*Phyllis Kirk takes bed and board in a turn-of-the-century New York rooming house, but with midnight visitors like Vincent Price, how bored can she get?*

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**RIGHT:** Hey, anyone got a match? Phyllis Kirk can't hold a candle to the wax-covered corpse of Carolyn Jones, not with mad sculptor Vincent Price rolling about the premises. A memorable trio from 1953's *HOUSE OF WAX*.

its visual gimmick. There's hardly a scene without a fist flying out of the screen or a body falling into the laps of the audience, and the movie spectacularly demonstrates that paddle-ball is to 3-D what the Coney Island roller coaster is to Cinerama.

*HOUSE OF WAX* is a classic example of the Hollywood hard-sell, but one needn't be ashamed of liking it. In fact, it's a well-mounted and riveting shocker, probably the best American made period thriller of the decade. Its big horror scenes (the fire in the wax museum; the nail-biting climax wherein heroine Phyllis Kirk narrowly escapes being consumed in a cauldron of boiling wax, and, most memorably, the char-faced Price pursuing Kirk down a gas-lit, cobblestoned New York street) all hold up splendidly. Andre DeToth's direction is crisp and well-proportioned, coaxing believable performances from the cast. David Buttolph's score is effective, right down to the cornball creepiness of the theremin underscoring the mayhem.

Though *HOUSE OF WAX* is a perennial favorite, horror fans have been curiously reticent to lavish upon it anything but back-handed praise, despite a major theatrical revival in 1981. The movie was for years regarded condescendingly as a "cheapjack" remake of Michael Curtiz's *THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM* (1933), a horror "classic" so long out of circulation that it was believed lost. But lost films have a way of being found again, and when a two-color print at last became available, enthusiasm for the picture had cooled. After the inevitable reappraisal, *THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM* seemed less stylish than



Curtiz's earlier *DOCTOR X* (1932) and possibly even a notch below his underrated Boris Karloff vehicle *THE WALKING DEAD* (1936).

Now that the charge that *HOUSE OF WAX* is nothing more than a hokey re-

make of an old milestone can be put to rest, it's high time to give the film some real recognition. If nothing else, it rocketed Vincent Price into the front ranks of horror stars.

—Michael Brunas

## The Pit and the Pendulum

It's a mystery why some horror fans dismiss Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe film cycle of the 60s with such comments as "Okay, but dull", "Repetitious", and the damning "Vincent Price is much too hammy." A pox on those who think such things! They fail to see that, for some films, subtlety is detrimental to the effect sought by the filmmakers. That said, if you really want to see a "primo" Price performance, then watch him as Nicholas—and eventually Sebastian—Medina in 1961's *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*.

Released by American International Pictures after the unexpected success of

the Corman-directed *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960), *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM* is low-budget filmmaking at its most brilliant. Shot in 15 days (which was still longer than Corman's usual schedule), the movie makes a mockery of most horror films made with much bigger budgets.

As Nicholas, Price is the adult result of one of the screen's least functional families, having watched his father Sebastian—one of the pillars of the Spanish Inquisition—torture his mother and her lover (Sebastian's brother) to death. In an introduction that parallels Price's first appearance in *USHER*, Nicholas' brother-in-

law, Francis (John Kerr), raps on a door, only to have Nicholas open it with remarkable suddenness, his face snooting out of the room like a cobra, a look of paranoid anger and confusion distorting his features. By this startling entrance alone, we know that the character's sanity is hanging by the merest thread.

Nevertheless, Price manages with great skill to make Nicholas Medina's madness a progressive affliction. Nicholas blames himself for allowing his wife, Elizabeth (Barbara Steele), to indulge an unhealthy interest in the instruments of torture within his father's secret chamber.



**No, it's not an all-male remake of Garbo's TWO-FACED WOMAN. Nor is it Ray Milland and Rosie Grier in THE THING WITH TWO HEADS. It's an atmospheric shot dramatizing Vincent Price's fractured persona in 1961's THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM.**

Frightened to death, Elizabeth expires with Sebastian's name on her lips. Soon enough, family friend Dr. Leon (Anthony Carbone) is revealed to be in league with the still-living Elizabeth in a plot to drive Nicholas mad. It doesn't work out precisely as planned, of course, and Nicholas—who's become, in his muddled mind, dear old dad—exact a horrific revenge.

Roger Corman was the first American director to bring a European look to his movies. Helped tremendously by Daniel Haller's lavish sets, Floyd Crosby's beautiful color photography, and Les Baxter's moving score (his best, I think), Corman elevates the low-budget film to unheard-of heights. Unfortunately, the performances, with the exception of Price and Steele, are arguably the weakest in the Poe series. (Granted little screen time, Steele is impressive in a scene in which she fondles Price's face while revelling in her plot to have Nicholas put away.)

Over the years, *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*'s reputation has suffered, perhaps as a result of the acclaim heaped on better-loved Price films. It may lack the Bergmanesque, critically-lauded look of 1964's *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*, or the stylish beauty of 1965's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*, but *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM* deserves its full share of plaudits. If nothing else, it has Vincent Price at his most mesmerizing.

—Bill Amazzini

# Laura

*I shall never forget the weekend Laura died. . . .*

—Waldo Lydecker

The story of the police detective who falls in love with the woman whose murder he is investigating is familiar, surely, to anyone interested enough in mysteries to be reading this magazine. Viewing it again, however, I found that *LAURA* (1944) has much more to offer than a portrait and a hit song.

What is especially interesting is the clash between worlds—Laura's and McPherson's. Mark McPherson, ably played by Dana Andrews, is a film noir gumshoe adrift in a Golden Age mystery. Standing awkwardly in the middle of Waldo Lydecker's opulent living room, he is obviously alien, as out of place as Poirot would be in Mike Hammer's environment. He is an intrusion, a real person who brings sweat, blood, and street smells into the perfumed milieu of Lydecker and Laura.

style. Laura lives in a world of privilege that few of us inhabit, and it is always fascinating to see the privileged in trouble. Basically, though, the characters hold this film together. They are true, in every particular, to who and what they are.

Clifton Webb's portrayal of Waldo Lydecker is the linch-pin of the piece. He is first seen luxuriating in a marble tub complete with typewriter, a sybaritic intellect fully equipped with stinging barbs and witty retorts. A brilliant, egotistical columnist and radio personality—"In my case self-absorption is completely justified"—Waldo seems vaguely familiar. Later, introduced to Shelby Carpenter and informed that Shelby's family is from Kentucky, the columnist looks down his nose and murmurs, "Sharecroppers, no doubt." It's immediately obvious that this is a thin Sheridan Whiteside, *THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER* in 1941. Both characters are essentially gigantic egos inhabiting epicene bodies. Both use language the way the Borgias used poison.



**Vincent Price as the "male beauty in distress" catches the attention of glamorous Gene Tierney as LAURA. Making his motion-picture debut, Broadway star Clifton Webb stands center stage, dripping acid.**

The mystery here is not, admittedly, on the level of Christie or Sayers. Indeed, it is no mystery at all to anyone who knows the story of Pygmalion and Galatea. Why, then, does *LAURA* continue to fascinate? Partly, I think, it's a matter of life

Piqued over references to age, each refers to gamboling with Betsy Ross. They even share the same hobby: famous murders. Is it coincidence? Hardly! The inspiration for both Whiteside and Lydecker was acerbic critic and Algonquin Round

Table regular Alexander Woolcott. The only difference between the characters, in fact, is that poor Waldo makes the mistake of falling in love. What if Whiteside had fallen in love with his secretary, Maggie Cutler?

That is their major distinction: Sherry thrives because he keeps himself intact; Waldo falls because he gives of himself to another, and becomes enamored of what he considers to be his own creation. "The best part of me, that's what you are," he tells Laura. Love is not a gift to such as Whiteside and Lydecker; it is complete destruction.

Laura herself is an enigma. Played by Gene Tierney at the height of her beauty, she is compelling, worldly, and seemingly wise: "I never have been and never will be bound by anything I don't do of my own free will!" This is no pushover speaking. Why, then, does she become attracted to arguably the dullest man in the film, Mark McPherson? Waldo claims that where her passions are concerned she deals only with the superficial. All a man needs is a strong, young body to recommend him to her. It is a weakness she is likely to regret.

Vincent Price, in the role of southern-born Shelby Carpenter, is a revelation, playing what—for this actor—is a perfectly normal character. Laura's fiancé and Ann Tredwell's gigolo, Shelby is gracious, urbane, and charming. His faults, though, keep appearing. Honesty is a

stranger to Shelby, and there is an indefinable air of helplessness about him that moves most women to protect him. As Waldo describes him, Shelby is "a male beauty in distress". Shelby himself, when asked whether he knows much about music, replies, "I don't know a lot about anything, but I know a little about practically everything." This is a man who knows himself. He knows he has little to offer but appearance and manners. Is there anything sadder than the hollow man who knows he's empty? Never attempting to dominate a scene, rather insinuating himself into the action, Price gives his character a sympathy that he probably never had in the script.

This brings us to Ann Tredwell, Laura's aunt, brilliantly played by Judith Anderson in a deftly understated performance. An aristocratic, wealthy woman, Ann has no illusions about herself or Shelby. When she confronts Laura, she states, quite sensibly, that Shelby should be hers "because I can afford him and I understand him. He's no good, but he's what I want. I'm not a nice person, Laura,

and neither is he. . . . We belong together." Indeed they do. When we last see them, Shelby has been stomach-punched and has collapsed in a chair. Ann hovers over him, and he kisses her hand, murmuring her name. It's nice to think that they lived wealthily ever after.

So it is the excellent characterizations, as well as the crispest and most sparkling of dialogue, that give LAURA its fascination. As Danny Peary remarks in *Cult Movies* (Dell, 1981): "This is ALL ABOUT EVE with a mystery," a movie to be seen and re-seen.

—Ken Schachtman



## The Haunted Palace

*While like a ghastly rapid river  
Through the pale door  
A hideous throng rush out forever  
And laugh but smile no more*

—Edgar Allan Poe

Starring Vincent Price, directed by Roger Corman, promoted and released by American International Pictures as one of their series of Edgar Allan Poe adaptations, 1963's THE HAUNTED PALACE is in fact based on H. P. Lovecraft's *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. The Poe connection is in the film's title, which is also that of a Poe poem quoted as the closing lines of Charles Beaumont's script. (The film was originally to be called THE HAUNTED VILLAGE, but the Poe influence won out over all.)

THE HAUNTED PALACE opens in 1765 as enraged men from the local New England village of Arkham storm the estate of the wicked warlock Joseph Curwen (Price). As he is burned alive, Curwen manages to place a curse on Arkham's entire population. A century and a half later, a descendent of Curwen,

Charles Dexter Ward (also Price), arrives in Arkham with his wife, Ann (Debra Paget), to claim his inheritance: the foreboding castle (i.e., the haunted palace). Uncannily, not only Ward, but also the villagers, all closely resemble their ancestors. (Why cast two sets of actors?) Ward and his wife also encounter some cursed descendants: mutants with missing eyes, absent mouths, and distorted features. Arriving at last at the family manse, the newcomers find that it comes complete with an old family retainer named Simon Orme (Lon Chaney). The servant, aided and abetted by a few misguided townspeople, is keeping the life essence of the evil Curwen alive in anticipation of a proper host body. Naturally, that body belongs to Ward.

Conceived of by Corman during the production of 1962's THE PREMATURE BURIAL, PALACE was finally made between THE RAVEN (1963) and THE

MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1964). Scheduled to star, along with BURIAL's Ray Milland and Hazel Court, was Boris Karloff in the role eventually assayed by Chaney (the Wolf Man stepped in when King Karloff fell ill). Price and Paget inherited the Milland and Court roles, and were supported by such Corman stock-company actors as Bruno Ve Sota and John Dierkes. Also in the cast: Frank Maxwell, Leo Gordon, and film noir veteran Elisha Cook.

—Jim Knüsch



THE HAUNTED PALACE, the film that would be Poe, is actually based on H. P. Lovecraft's *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*.

# HOUSE OF USHER

In a recent issue of *Cinefantastique*, Jonathan Demme, director of *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* (1991), recalled a conversation he had with Roger Corman: "It was Roger who told me, many years ago, 'The most terrifying shot in movies is a hand-held camera moving slowly up toward a closed door.'"

Corman should know. He used this selfsame technique to introduce Vincent Price as Roderick Usher in *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960). Harry Ellerbe, as Bristol, the Usher family servant, leads hero Mark Damon upstairs to his master's room. As they approach the door, it unexpectedly swings open, revealing an angry Usher: quite an effective entrance for Price, one of the masters of horror.

**HOUSE OF USHER** was the first in the series of Edgar Allan Poe adaptations Corman made for American International Pictures. Price shines in his understated performance, playing a hypersensitive man teetering on the edge of insanity. Roderick Usher is an

ominous, imposing figure, hovering over his sister like a malevolent ghost.

Instead of giving the overwrought, scenery-chewing performance one might expect, Price plays Roderick as a gentle, soft-spoken man who cannot stand loud noise. It's a testament to the actor's skill that Roderick still comes across as a despicable, if pitiable, villain. The literate script by Richard Matheson serves the star well, as do the lavish Daniel Haller sets of the crumbling manse.

Ellerbe does an excellent job in the role of Bristol, triumphing over incredibly poor "old age" makeup, but Damon and Myrna Fahey seem bland as the young lovers. (Fahey comes into her own once she's buried

alive, though, and contributes effectively to the slam-bang finale.)

The director keeps the show moving. He confidently builds suspense and horror without the use of graphic gore, relying instead on color, mood, pacing, and—as noted by Demme—unique camera angles.

**HOUSE OF USHER** is the best version of the Poe classic, far superior to the remakes that followed. It presents Vincent Price at the very top of his form.

—Sean Farrell

*Old sins cast long shadows...*

Thunder rolls across the heavens. Lightning strikes and illuminates the front of Blyddpactwr (or Baldpate) Manor: an eerie, Gothic mansion on the Scottish moors, containing creaking doors, misty corridors, and a sinister skeleton in one of its closets.

**THE HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS** (1982) deserves special notice, as it contains the only appearance of horror legends Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, and John Carradine in a single

## THE HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS

film. **LONG SHADOWS** is based on Earl Derr Biggers' 1917 novel *Seven Keys to Baldpate* and the subsequent theatrical adaptation by George M. Cohan. (Biggers, of course, is considerably more famous for having created the Oriental sleuth Charlie Chan.) To date, there have been at least five other rarely-seen film versions of this "old dark house" comedy/mystery.

The plot revolves around a wager between a young writer (inexplicably-cast Desi Arnaz, Jr.) and his publisher (British veteran Richard Todd). The writer must spend one night in the sufficiently spooky house, where a very eccentric family is gathering to celebrate the 40th anniversary of a ghastly family secret. Once there, those assembled start dropping like flies.

Director Peter Walker and screenwriter Michael Armstrong concocted a tongue-in-cheek chiller that has more than one trick up its sleeve, but it's the real thrill of finally seeing this dream cast of horror giants interact that gives the film its special vitality.

Critic and novelist David Everitt wrote of the film in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural*, "In the current phase of special effects terror executed on screen by anonymous stalkers, Price's splendid performance in this film, along with those of his co-stars, serves as a reminder of an older brand of horror filmmaking that revolved around personality and dramatic finesse."

A brand of filmmaking that, I think, is sorely missed.

—Scot D. Ryerson



# the TINGLER

With the demise of 3-D in the mid-50s, enterprising filmmakers contrived other novelties in an effort to pry the American public away from their television screens. The most flamboyant entrepreneur by far was William Castle. A house director for Columbia's "B" unit for many years, the aggressive showman carved a niche for himself in horror-film history by devising a series of tacky, impractical gimmicks that succeeded in arousing nightmares only in ambitious theater managers, who dutifully rigged their movie houses with all sorts of mechanical paraphernalia according to the dictates of Castle's latest scare fest.

Castle's real contribution to the genre was not *Emergo*, *Percepto*, or the *Coward's Corner*, but his casting of Vincent Price in two of the actor's most enjoyable films. Released prior to Roger Corman's series of lurid Poe adaptations, *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* and *THE TINGLER* boasted Price in fine form: cool, calculating, and in full control of his talents.

A sheer delight from first frame to last, *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* (1958) featured the actor as eccentric millionaire Frederick Loren, who throws a "haunted house party" for five strangers, only to discover that his treacherous wife (Carol Ohmart) has conspired with one of the guests (Alan Marshal) to murder him. Price is at his witty, sophisticated best, and seems to enjoy his stature as the film's red herring, who craftily turns tables on his would-be murderers. He strides through the contrived mayhem with his tongue firmly planted in his cheek.

A preposterous premise and a gimmick every bit as outrageous as Castle's previous stunts only added to the pleasure of *THE TINGLER* (1959), about as

far-fetched a chiller as you're likely to encounter. Price portrays Dr. Warren Chapin, a research scientist who has dedicated himself to discovering the physiological cause and effect of fear. Chapin is convinced that a tangible force, which he calls the Tingler, is created within a person at the height of fear, and that this force is squelched only by the victim's scream.

Failing to prove his outlandish theory after experimenting on both himself and his uncooperative spouse (Patricia

frightened his wife to death, utilizing the scientist's theories.

In what has heretofore been a somber, effectively eerie film, buoyed by low-keyed camerawork, a moody score, and fine performances by Price, Evelyn, and Coolidge, *THE TINGLER* suddenly takes a hilarious turn as Chapin removes from Martha's body the still-living Tingler: a crawly, centipede-like organism with an inexplicable propensity for strangling innocent bystanders to death. The creature escapes from its cage, slips through the floor boards, and ends up in the crowded theater below.

All hell breaks loose as the Tingler crawls up the leg of the prettiest girl in the house. "Scream for your lives!" Chapin cries. "The Tingler is loose in this theatre!" At this point in the movie, Castle's highly publicized "Percepto" gimmick was put into action: selected theatre seats, outfitted with electric motors, emitted mild shocks, simulating Tingler attacks. Chapin captures the errant organism and returns it to Martha's body. In a neat wrap-up, the dead woman's corpse, eyes ablaze, rises from the bed and faces her murderer. Ollie dies of fright.

Once again, Price is set up as an obvious red herring. The deception isn't likely to fool anyone who's seen enough movies: anyone as kind and supportive as Chapin toward the plot's secondary characters isn't traditionally the guilty party. (The only time we see the doctor's darker side is in his bitchy confrontations with his philandering wife, but his malice here is understandable.) The actor's offscreen reputation with both peers and admirers as a warm, humane person has rarely been embodied to such great effect as in *THE TINGLER*.

—John Brunas



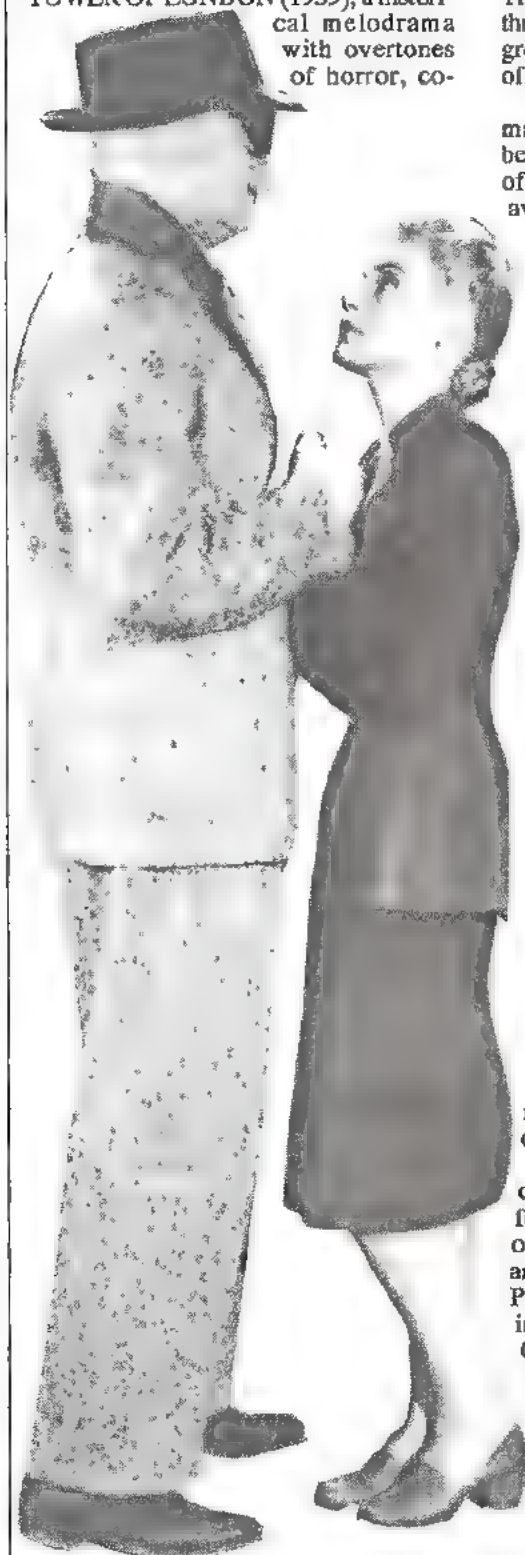
Cutts), Chapin finds the ideal subject in Martha Higgins (Judith Evelyn), the deaf-mute wife of a casual acquaintance. When the poor woman winds up dead, the finger of suspicion naturally points to Chapin. But it is Martha's saturnine husband, Ollie (Philip Coolidge), who

frights his wife to death, utilizing the scientist's theories.

# HOUSE on HAUNTED HILL

# THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS

By the end of 1939, 28-year-old Vincent Price had completed two films in a multi-picture contract with Universal. The first, in 1938, was the comedic *SERVICE DE LUXE*. The next, *TOWER OF LONDON* (1939), a historical melodrama with overtones of horror, co-



starred Price, Basil Rathbone, and Boris Karloff. It was Price's first encounter with the genre. In 1940 came *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS*, Universal's follow-up to the original 1933 classic. The sequel, a handsome, well-mounted thriller, helped launch the studio's second great horror-film cycle and was Price's official induction into horror films.

The actor plays a young Englishman, Sir Geoffrey Radcliffe, who has been wrongfully accused of the murder of his brother. Imprisoned, Geoffrey awaits his execution. His friend, Dr. Frank Griffin (brother of Jack Griffin, the original Invisible Man and creator of the invisibility serum), visits Geoffrey in his cell and injects him with the solution, enabling him to escape and track down the killer. His quest soon becomes a twofold venture: to elude Scotland Yard's relentless Inspector Sampson (Cecil Kellaway) and to locate the true culprit before the drug's side effect kicks in and induces madness.

Price was effective in his first full-fledged chiller and displayed many of the qualities his fans came to know and love, including a dash of "over-the-top" acting. A prime example of this is the scene in which his character confronts Willie Spears (Alan Napier), a drunken sot of a night watchman, whom Geoffrey suspects knows more about the murder than he lets on. The Invisible One's ravings while taunting Spears in the guise of a ghost allowed Price to open the acting floodgates and pour forth a torrent of rage, bringing the nervous wreck of a man to his knees in a confession. A favorite moment in the film comes later, in the famous scarecrow sequence, a setting stark and cold in which the seriously wounded Geoffrey murmurs pitifully to the straw man, "Don't be scared, old crow—I only want your clothes."

The film was helmed by German director Joe May, a taskmaster known for his painstaking work habits, which often delayed production and kept cast and crew working into the wee hours. Price apparently got on well with May, in part because of his ability to speak German, and went on to work with the director later the same year in *HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES*. The supporting cast, including Sir Cedric Hardwicke, John Sutton, Nan Grey, and Forrester Harvey, turned in sturdy performances, although Sutton lacked intensity in a role that

didn't provide him with much to do besides mix chemicals, lie to the police, and protect Geoffrey's fiancée. The special effects by John P. Fulton are even more impressive than they were the first time around, the Invisible Man interacting with others in the cast so seamlessly that at times he doesn't seem like an effect at all. We are also treated to sights only described by Claude Rams in the original, such as Price appearing phantomlike in a rainstorm and as a human-shaped black hole in a smoke-filled room. It's hard to forget the scene in which Geoffrey looks at his bandaged face in a mirror, removes his goggles, and reveals empty holes in his gauze-wrapped head where his eyes ought to be, with the bandages at the back of his head showing through. Price's body language and the melancholy strains of the musical score by Hans J. Salter and Frank Skinner underline the tragedy and loneliness of his situation.

The Invisible Man series, with a few twists and turns, kept going strong through the 40s with *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN* (1940), *INVISIBLE AGENT* (1942), *THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE* (1944), and the customary last stop on the line, *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1951). The latter film borrowed some footage as well as dialogue from the Price entry in the series. Interestingly, the character even had a cameo in the closing minute of *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948), and, although Claude Rains was always more heavily identified with the Bandaged One and actor Jon Hall had played him twice, it was Vincent Price's voice that provided the climactic scare for Bud and Lou in that film.

As sequels go, *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* measures up proudly alongside its predecessor, its only faults being occasional talkiness and a somewhat sparse use of background music, which could have quickened the pace had it been further utilized. (The main title and closing themes are among the most moving ever written by Salter.) These are minor flaws, to be sure; for the most part the film and Price remain on the straight and narrow for a surprisingly sober 81 minutes.

—Richard Scrivani

**LEFT:** Nan Grey, who died four years earlier at the fangs of *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*, found true love in the unsightly arms of Vincent Price in *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940).



No actor ever had more dead wives come back to taunt him than Vincent Price, pictured here—for a welcome change of pace—with a soon-to-be-dead daughter (Maggie Pierce). The "Morella" segment from the American International Picture **TALES OF TERROR**, directed by Roger Corman.

"This is the beat of a human heart," intones Vincent Price as the brief opening title of **TALES OF TERROR** fades to the pulsating crimson image he describes. "You are experiencing the heartbeat of a dying man. And it is with death and dying that we concern ourselves."

**TALES OF TERROR** (1962) was American International Pictures' fourth (and Price's third) foray into Edgar Allan Poe territory. This time, director Roger Corman and screenwriter Richard Matheson created an anthology of three tales, with Price starring as different characters in each. Spicing up the stew are appearances by venerable veterans Basil Rathbone and Peter Lorre.

The first and briefest segment, "Morella", is virtually a test run for the full-

length **TOMB OF LIGEIA** (1965). As such, it has some effectively scary moments, but is ultimately the weakest of the three. Price plays Locke, a drunken, morose man who roams his cobwebbed mansion still mourning his wife, Morella, who died 26 years earlier giving birth to their daughter, Lenora (Maggie Pierce). Conveniently, he can mourn her in person, having exhumed her body and enshrined it in the family four-poster, where the visiting Lenora—with a shriek—discovers it. Locke tells his daughter of her mother's deathbed vow of vengeance and his own less-than-parental urges: "I took you out of your cradle and almost hurled you out of the window!" "I wish you had!" sobs Lenora. Counteracting some of the histrionic dialogue is an eerie scene in which the

dark, shadowy ghost of Morella enters the house, floats up the stairs, and stills the beating heart of her daughter, possessing her lifeless body.

"The Black Cat", based on Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" as well as the titular tale, is an enjoyable comic piece featuring Price's priceless mugging as Fortunato Luchesi, a snobbish wine taster. He meets more than his match in drunken braggart Montresor Herringbone (Peter Lorre), who crashes a wine merchant's convention and beats the connoisseur at his own tipsy game. When it is revealed that Fortunato has been dallying with Montresor's neglected wife, Annabel (Joyce Jameson), the wronged husband kills his bride, drugs her lover, and bricks them both behind the wine-cellar wall. Lorre, who reportedly ad-

# TALES OF TERROR

libbed much of his dialogue, made **TALES OF TERROR** his return to the horror genre after 16 years, and remained with AIP for **THE RAVEN** and **THE COMEDY OF TERRORS** (both 1963).

The final story, "The Case of M. Valdemar", is the best-paced and most satisfying entry. It benefits greatly from the presence of Basil Rathbone as the mad mesmerist, Carmichael, who wishes to hypnotize the terminally ill Valdemar (Price) at the point of death. He succeeds in doing so, over the objections of Valdemar's physician (David Frankham) and anguished wife (the striking Debra Paget). Although his body is dead, Valdemar's mind lives on for months in a tortured limbo, with the power-mad Carmichael unwilling to release his hypnotic hold. Valdemar ultimately wreaks his vengeance in a chilling resurrection scene, as he frightens Carmichael to death, collapsing upon him in an oozing heap.

Among the truest to its source material of the series, **TALES OF TERROR**, thanks to its creators and stars, is infused with a sense of fun that keeps Poe's utter morbidity within an exceptionally entertaining framework.

—John J. Mathews



*The drinks are on the house—and one of the drunks is later walled up in the house—during a wine-tasting contest between Peter Lorre and Vincent Price. "The Black Cat" segment from **TALES OF TERROR** (1962), which cleverly incorporated elements from Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado".*

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# Dragonwyck

Joseph Mankiewicz wrote and directed this 1946 20th Century Fox production based on Anya Seton's popular novel. A historical romance with heavy Gothic overtones, the plot has all the usual trappings—the innocent young wife, a gloomy manor house, ethereal singing and harpsichord music, and even (at the appropriate moment) a suitably violent storm. Dominating the story is Nicholas Van Ryn, a self-styled Hudson Valley aristocrat determined to resist all his tenant farmers' efforts toward reform. This is the man who takes his young cousin Miranda from her family's farm in Connecticut, first as governess, then as his wife.

The role of Van Ryn was ideally suited to Vincent Price's flamboyant style. He is stubborn, proud, and absolutely determined to achieve his selfish ends: the continuation of his privileged position and the birth of a son to carry on the tradition (hence his need for a wife). Price is especially good in his early scenes with Miranda and her father, played by Gene Tierney and Waller Huston, easily sweeping the impressionable girl off her feet while disarming her suspicious father. In fact, Huston makes

such a perfect foil for the actor, one wishes that Price's other rival for Miranda's affections (Glenn Langan, future *Amazing Colossal Man*) had been stronger.

Perhaps the most memorable sequence in the film comes near the end, when Miranda, estranged from her husband after the death of their infant son, decides to climb the narrow stairs to visit Nicholas in his secret lair at the top of the house. In the poignant scene that follows, Van Ryn defiantly confesses his drug addiction—the only time Price allows us a glimpse of his character's vulnerable side. This entire sequence, beautifully lit by cinematographer Arthur Miller, carries echoes of German expressionism and hints at the

truly great film that **DRAGONWYCK** might have been.

Though it falls just short of classic status, **DRAGONWYCK** has many virtues, chief among them Price's towering performance as the dark hero, Nicholas Van Ryn.

—Jonh Skillin



# THE RAVEN

- Who was the raven?
- What was his diabolical errand?
- Could anyone ignore the warning from beyond the grave?
- Do you dare to spend one night in Dr. Scarabus' sinister castle?
- Will your heart stand the suspense?
- Is your stomach strong enough to bear the brutal torture of an innocent young girl?
- And what of the wanton, lustful beauty whose name was Lenore?

—From the back cover of the 1963 Lancer Books novelization of *THE RAVEN* by Eunice Sudak.

The premise: Dr. Craven (Vincent Price) is a timid, retiring, extremely powerful magician—the son, in fact, of the former grand master of the Brotherhood of Magicians. Dr. Scarabus (Boris Karloff) is the current grand master, and is desirous of Craven's secrets so that he may be the most powerful magician ever. Dr. Bedlo (Peter Lorre) is a newly instated member of the Brotherhood who would like to be more powerful, and therefore is willing to do Scarabus' bidding in return for tutelage in the higher arts. Lenore (Hazel Court) is Craven's supposedly dead wife; Estelle (Olive Sturgess) is his daughter; Rexford (Jack Nicholson) is the son of Dr. Bedlo. As the film begins, we find Craven alone in his study, lamenting the lost Lenore. Estelle arrives with comforting words and a goblet of warm milk, and then leaves her father to his loneliness. Craven hears an odd tapping sound. No one is at the door, but when he checks the window, he finds a stately, albeit dishevelled, raven. He opens the window, and in hops the bird. Looking around, it spies a bust above the door and leaves the window ledge to perch upon this likely spot. Craven settles in his chair and returns to his lament, this time addressing the bird: "Answer me, monster, tell me truly. Shall I ever hold

again that radiant maiden whom the angels call Lenore?" Quoth the raven, "How the hell should I know? What am I, a fortune teller?"

And that's about as close as the movie gets to Poe's poem.

*THE RAVEN* (1963) was the sixth in Roger Corman's series of Poe films. It was Richard Matheson's fourth Poe screenplay for Corman and he felt it was time to play it for laughs. The director agreed. Corman's choice for the juvenile was a young, handsome Jack Nicholson, whose deadpan delivery makes one's heart sing.

But Corman and Matheson can't claim credit for all the comedy. Some of Peter Lorre's finest ad libs are found in this film. In the crypt rummaging for dead man's hair with Vincent Price, Lorre comments, "Hard to keep clean, huh?" Price replies, "Yes, well, I don't get down here often."

Corman commented, in Ed Nana's *The Films of Roger Corman: Brilliance on a Budget* (Arco Publishing, 1982), "Peter kept everyone on their toes, myself included. He would just begin to improvise unexpectedly. Vincent was always willing to play along with it but Boris, who was very methodical in terms of his craft, was a bit befuddled. Amused, but befuddled. . . ."

The climax, in which the two rivals battle it out, begins with minor trickery. Price, as Craven, is supremely bored by it all. With the flick of a hand, he stops Scarabus' projectiles as they hurtle toward him. Karloff, as Scarabus, grows ever more frustrated. Corman's direction, combined with the skill and artistry of veteran cameraman Floyd Crosby, draws the viewers into the great hall of Scarabus' castle for a front-row seat in this "duel to the death" between magicians.

*THE RAVEN* is by no means without its flaws. I question, for example, Rexford's stint on the ledge. When he leaves the window, Rexford immediately turns a corner and moves out of sight of the waiting Estelle. Why then does she scream when he loses his footing and almost falls? She can't see him. Still, this is a minor point in the scheme of things.

During the last week of filming on *THE RAVEN*, Corman decided to make further use of Daniel Haller's striking sets. In one week he wrote a script, dubbed it *THE TERROR*—which in many ways it was—and began filming. Reports vary as to whether Karloff was hired for two extra days, or simply owed AIP more time on his *RAVEN* contract. Whatever the circum-

stances, Corman utilized Karloff's talents and the Gothic corridors to their full advantage, writing more dialogue as needed, and completing Karloff's scenes in the requisite 48 hours.

The remaining scenes in *THE TERROR* were shot sporadically over the next three months.

—Jessie Lilley



# The Comedy of Terrors

In a quaint New England village in the 1890s, the funeral establishment of Hinchley and Trumbull is beset by dire financial reversals. Happily for besotted Waldo Trumbull (Vincent Price) and his bumbling jailbird confederate, Felix Gilhe (Peter Lorre), money is about to come their way. Mr. Phipps (Buddy Mason), a retired seafaring gentleman, has died during the early morning hours—sped on his journey to Heaven's gate by Trumbull and a handy feather pillow. Now, having confirmed the death to which he was such an ardent contributor, Trumbull comforts the grieving Mrs. Phipps (Beverly Hills) with words of heartfelt insincerity:

"I'm afraid, madam, that he has made that final crossing to that Stygian shore."

"What?" asks the puzzled widow.

"He's dead," translates Trumbull. "Allow me, madam, in this moment of your most desolate bereavement, to lift from your sorrowful shoulders the burdensome tasks of exequy and sepulture."

"What?" asks the puzzled widow.

"I'll bury him for you. For by the most coincidental of vicissitudes, madam, I happen to be the owner and director of a local funeral parlor."

"You are?"

"Yes, indeed. As we like to say to those we serve, when loved ones lie on the lonely couch of everlasting sleep, let Hinchley and Trumbull draw the coverlet."

"How tender."

"Yes, isn't it?"

Mr. Trumbull helps the tear-streaked Mrs. Phipps out the room and, turning to pull the door shut behind him, addresses the patient Mr. Gilhe:

"Remove the carcass."

Film farce is one of the toughest forms of comedy to pull off successfully. For every *SOME LIKE IT HOT* (1959) and *ONE, TWO, THREE* (1961), in which the gags build with mathematical precision, there's a *WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S* (1989) with its string of missed opportunities. Add an element of horror to the farce formula and it becomes harder still to achieve laugh-getting results (We're

speaking here of the classic farce, French in origin, of slamming doors, falling pants, misplaced objects, and unexpected solutions to life's little problems. Movie comedy in its heyday relied on either placing established comics at the center of the story, relegating the supporting cast to fairly realistic behavior on the sidelines, or

International's *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS* (1964).

Richard Matheson's screenplay, engagingly embellished with flowery dialects and Shakespearean allusions (the very title of the film sets its tenor), supports the central premise of a funeral business providing itself with corpses by setting, from the very onset, a series of subplots spinning wildly. We quickly learn that the firm of Hinchley and Trumbull has but one coffin to its name; indeed, we watch Trumbull and Gilhe dump the coffin's current resident into a waiting grave and polish the box in anticipation of its next occupant. One scene later, we meet Amaryllis Trumbull (Joyce Jameson), a buxom blonde who gave up "a promising operatic career" for marriage to the wife-hating funeral director—never mind that her ear-splitting arias crack pottery and wilt posies. Completing the family portrait is Mrs. Trumbull's senile old father, Amos Hinchley (Boris Karloff), who is continually denied the medicine (read "poison") that Trumbull so eagerly seeks to administer. The burial plot's major twist, lifted straight from Matheson's Poe adaptations for AIP, arrives with the introduction of landlord John F. Black (Basil Rathbone), a Bard-spouting curmudgeon who stubbornly refuses to stay dead no matter how many times Trumbull and Gilhe try to ease him into the afterlife.

*THE COMEDY OF TERRORS* reverses the hierarchy of 1963's *THE RAVEN*, a horror farce featuring Price as a mild-mannered conjuror put upon by the scheming Dr. Bedlo, played by Lorre. The tall, saturnine Price, whose *RAVEN* character denied him a chance to let fly with his usual

brand of menace, came as close as he ever would to playing a wimp; conversely, the short, cherubic Lorre, who was never better than when he was plaintively excusing his own murderous impulses, resorted to angry bluster as an alternative to casual malice. (1962's *TALES OF TERROR*, with Lorre as a drunken malcontent and Price as a foppish wine expert, also suffered from this casting against type.) *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS*, though, fits its stars like a glove. Lorre, murmuring

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combining romantic comedy with farce to produce the screwball comedies of the 30s and 40s.) The unjustly-neglected *TOPPER RETURNS* (1941), abounding in vanished bodies, flighty wives, and dithering detectives, is one of the most flavorsome blends of horror and farce. (Small wonder: *TOPPER RETURNS* was made at the Hal Roach Studios, home to Laurel and Hardy, the only comedy team to regularly gear their films to standard farce specifications.) Another forgotten gem is American

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to himself as he burgles a house ("Why did I ever escape from prison? It was so peaceful there.") is again the apologetic Dr. Einstein of 1944's *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*. Price, reveling in some of the fruitiest dialogue of his career, is a rancorous delight. Enjoying a temporary lull in his marital war with Amarrylis, he descends into his embalming room with a muttered "How I'd like to get her down here as a customer!" Forced to relinquish his much-used coffin when Mr. Black is interred topside, he wails, "I'd like to know what idiot thought of putting bodies in crypts instead of in the ground where they belong! No, we're going to have to buy another casket, that's all...and after using this one for only 13 years!"

In the role of Amos Hinchley, originally slated for Rathbone, third-billed Karloff has considerably less to do than his co-stars, but shines whenever he's given the chance. (The Horror King is particularly droll describing Egyptian mummification rites over dinner, and delivering a eulogy in which of Amos can't quite recall the name of the deceased.)

In the role of Mr. Black, originally slated for Karloff, Rathbone gets the best screen role of his twilight career. Utilizing a still-rich baritone and his natural theatricality, the actor pulls out all the stops when, alone at night, Black performs his own one-man production of *MACBETH*. Black's Shakespearean query, "What place is this?", intoned as he repeatedly shuns entombment, remains one of horror's most-quoted quotes. (Unfortunately, Rathbone thought as little of *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS* as he did his other forays into the horror field. Publicizing his autobiography shortly after the film was lensed, the former matinee idol was asked by this writer if he'd enjoyed making the AIP farce. "No!" was the curt reply, and that was that as far as horror movies were concerned.)

*THE COMEDY OF TERRORS* does have its flaws, including one it shares with *THE RAVEN* and the "Black Cat" segment of *TALES OF TERROR*: namely, the music of Les Baxter. Most of Baxter's background scores sound like elevator music after the elevator has plummeted a few dozen floors, but the composer's faults are magnified whenever he writes for comedy. Baxter thinks a funny film requires funny music to punch up the jokes; in practice, the opposite is true, and one must ignore Baxter's ceaselessly reminding us that what we're watching is fun in order to get the full measure of the film's humor. Deafen your ears to Les Baxter—much as Trumbull deafens his ears to his wife's caterwauling—and *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS*, directed by fright-film veteran Jacques Tourneur, is an unqualified comic scream.

—Richard Valley

# The Fly

What can one say about a late-50s Vincent Price horror flick that's even less believable than 1959's *THE TINGLER*? Well, first one can say its name: *THE FLY*. Most likely, the second thing one can, and will, say—and that in a squeaky, high-pitched voice—is "Help me! Help me!"

Released in 1958 by 20th Century Fox, *THE FLY* caused such a buzz at the box office that it was followed in 1959 by *THE RETURN OF THE FLY*, again with Price, and in 1965 by the Price-less *CURSE OF THE FLY*, in which film-dom's first Professor Bernard Quatermass, Brian Donlevy, tried to keep his hairpiece on while producing loathsome little blobs in his handy-dandy matter disintegrator/integrator. (Relegated to the sidelines in the original and its followup, Price gets little chance to nip at the scenery, but *THE FLY* does give him the opportunity to be the only man on film to find his brother trapped in a web and about to be devoured by a spider.)

Naturally, *THE FLY*'s success meant that it would be followed not only by sequels, but also, given time, by a remake. If 1986's *THE FLY*, starring Jeff Goldblum and directed by David Cronenberg, is arguably a better film than its namesake—the argument being that Goldblum's transformation (in the remake) into a thoroughly repellent fly-thing is more feasible than David Hedison's transformation (in the original) into both a man with a fly's head and a fly with a man's head—well, it's not nearly as much fun. Like its schlocky predecessor, the remake spawned a sequel (this time with Eric Stoltz struggling out of his genes), but *THE FLY II* met with as much success as vinegar does with you-know-what.

Still, what goes around comes around—especially in Hollywood—so we may yet see the day when another *FLY* opens.

—Drew Sullivan



Devoted uncle Francois Delambre (Vincent Price) and his nephew Phillipe (Charles Herbert) find *THE FLY* trapped in a spider's web, crying for help. The little bugga is Price's brother and Herbert's devoted dad. (Child actor Herbert had little luck with parents. In 1958's *COLOSSUS OF NEW YORK*, daddy Ross Martin got his brain transplanted into the head of a gigantic robot.)

# The Conqueror Worm

*Perhaps the most gratuitously visually sadistic of all of Price's motion pictures to date. . . .*

—James Robert Parrish and Steven Whitney, *Vincent Price Unmasked* (Drake Publishing, 1974)

The above was not an uncommon opinion following the initial release of *THE CONQUEROR WORM* in 1968.

Nearly a quarter of a century later, however, the tide of opinion has shifted.

The film was originally conceived by Tony Tenser, head of Tigon productions. Tenser owned the rights to the novel *Witchfinder General* by Ronald Bassett, and approached director Michael Reeves to take on the project. (Reeves had just finished directing Boris Karloff in 1967's *THE SORCERERS*, an AIP/Tigon co-production). Bassett's novel was adapted by Reeves and Tom Baker, and was planned as a vehicle for Donald Pleasence.

When AIP joined the team, the company insisted that Reeves use Vincent Price as Hopkins, much to the director's dismay. Reeves tactlessly voiced his displeasure to his star. Despite the resulting friction, or perhaps because of it, Price turns in a marvelous, low-key performance, one full of many subtle shadings. Also in the cast: Reeves' regular leading man, Ian Ogilvy (best known as the star of the first TV revival of *THE SAINT*), character actor Rupert Davies, newcomer Hillary Dwyer, Robert Russell, and Patrick Wymark. (Wymark's opening narration sets the times and political climate of the story to follow.)

The film, set in the late 17th century, takes place during a time of great civil unrest. Oliver Cromwell and his Parliamentary forces are fighting King Charles I and his Royalists. The country is split in its loyalties, the people succumbing to old superstitions, accusing their fellow townspeople of witchcraft and sorcery. It is in this atmosphere that Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General, plies his unsavory trade. (The real Hopkins was a

lawyer, commissioned by Parliament to search East Anglia for signs of witchcraft. Via torture, Hopkins induced confessions of the practice of the black arts from many a poor soul. The "guilty" would then be put to death, generally by hanging, as very few "witches" were actually burned.)

The *CONQUEROR WORM* begins as Hopkins watches the hanging of an



Matthew Hopkins (Vincent Price) uses his usual methods of interrogation on a suspected witch in Michael Reeves' *THE CONQUEROR WORM*.

accused witch (the opening title reads: MATTHEW HOPKINS: THE CONQUEROR WORM, which makes little sense). Hopkins and his assistant, John Stearne (Russell), travel from town to town, dispensing "justice" at the price of three silver coins per witch. At their next stop, the two question a local priest, John Lowes (Davies). The priest has a pretty ward, Sara (Dwyer), who offers herself to Hopkins in exchange for her guardian's life. Hopkins puts the priest in a cell while he samples the carnal pleasures offered by Sara. When Hopkins is called away to another town, Stearne rapes the young girl. Upon his return, Hopkins, learning what has transpired, has the priest and two other accused townspeople put to death. He and Stearne collect their blood money and depart.

The girl's betrothed, Richard Marshall (Ogilvy), vows vengeance. A soldier in Cromwell's army, he risks court-martial by pursuing the two witchfinders. Unfortunately, he and Sara are caught by

Hopkins and accused of witchcraft. Marshall's fellow soldiers attempt a rescue, freeing their comrade in arms, who quickly kills Stearne by driving the spur of his boot into the villain's eye. Marshall then grabs a battle axe and brutally hacks away at Hopkins. Horrified, one of the soldiers shoots Hopkins to put him out of his misery. "You took him from me," howls Marshall, his cries of anger and frustration mixing with Sara's screams of pain and horror.

The film is more historical drama than pure horror film (though in real life Hopkins died fairly well-to-do, in his own bed, of natural causes). It takes place in a disturbing world in which everyone is either mad or driven to madness. Even the young hero, well intentioned at the start of the film, becomes so obsessed with seeking revenge that it consumes him.

*THE CONQUEROR WORM* invited criticism because of its prevailing mood of sex and violence. Though not as graphic as some later im-

itations, the film does not shy away from dramatizing the viciousness of the times—Cromwell's campaigns were so cruel and his short reign so harsh that, after his death, the people of England gladly welcomed Charles II, son of Cromwell's vanquished foe, calling him "Goodtime Charlie"—and the atmosphere of mistrust in which one's neighbors, for their own petty reasons, could accuse one of all sorts of horrors is vividly conveyed.

Reeves was set to direct *THE OBLONG BOX* for AIP, but a drug overdose (whether accidental or intentional has never been determined) took the 25-year-old director's life and brought to an end a promising career.

Note: HBO VIDEO has released *THE CONQUEROR WORM* on tape and laserdisc. The transfer is beautiful, but Paul Ferris' original score has been dropped in favor of a vastly inferior synthesizer score by Kendall Schmidt.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

# WEAVER'S WORLD

If Tom Weaver doesn't know a fact, a piece of background information, or an anecdote about a given film—well, kids, it never happened. Here are some juicy tidbits gleaned from Tom's secret files on the subject of Vincent Price...

By the late 50s, American International's formula for success was being duplicated by several other small Hollywood companies, forcing AIP to take a step up in class. Over lunch, Roger Corman and studio heads James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff agreed to try making a better-grade film, in color, with a 15-day schedule rather than the usual 10. *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960) kicked off the now-legendary Poe series, which outstayed its welcome as it dragged on into the 70s. Nicholson brought in writer Richard Matheson, who was paid \$5,000 to adapt Poe's 18-page short story. (Charles B. Griffith, Corman's usual screenwriter, was miffed at not getting the assignment.) Matheson comments on the quality of *HOUSE OF USHER*, "I would like to have seen (let's say) Joseph Losey direct it, and some of the performances were a little limited, I think." He also remembers *USHER* for the only time that he ever saw Price angry, during a scene in which male ingenue Mark Damon hurled an axe and accidentally struck Price in the shin. ("Price uttered the only profanity I ever heard him say.")

AIP's gala charity premiere in Palm Springs attracted not only co-stars Damon and Myrna Fahey (who died in 1973), but also Dwayne Hickman, Edd "Kookie" Byrnes, Jock Mahoney, Michael Landon, Tuesday Weld, Jerry Paris, Cliff Robertson, Doug McClure, John Saxon, Dyan Cannon, and Burt Reynolds. The Poe story was previously filmed in 1928 (twice), 1941, 1942 (an amateur short by Curtis Harrington), 1948, and 1955. There was also a 1956 episode of TV's *MATINEE THEATRE* starring Tom Tryon (as Usher), Marshall Thompson, and Edwardo Gannelli.

\*\*\*

Robb White, William Castle's writing/producing partner, came up with the idea for *THE TINGLER* (1959) after being shown a foot-long rubber worm devised (for reasons unknown) by make-up man Jack Dusick (who'd worked on their previous *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* in 1958). White was including an LSD trip for Price's character in the film's script, so he decided, after a chat with Aldous Huxley, to try the stuff (which was then legal) himself. After "tripping" courtesy of a doctor at UCLA, White described his reactions to Price, hoping that the actor would play the scene realistically, rather than indulge in overplaying. Price told White to forget it. "In the movie," White laughs, "he jumped around and did the same Goddamned thing he always did!" According to White (who died in 1991), Castle could "lie faster than anybody I ever saw! We went to a meeting at Columbia one time and he told a horrendous lie. And when we came out I said, 'Bill, why

did you tell a lie like that?' And he said, 'To keep in practice!' He was unembarrassable, that guy!"

\*\*\*

Not only is *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM* (1961) regarded by fans as one of the best entries in the Poe series, but it's also fondly remembered by company exec Sam Arkoff, who mentioned *PIT*, *LOVE AT FIRST BITE* (1970), *THE AMITYVILLE HORROR* (1979), and *DRESSED TO KILL* (1980) when asked to name his favorite American International Pictures. Price's later *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE BIKINI MACHINE* (1965) featured a parody of the Poe film's famous pendulum scene, using stock footage from *PIT* and putting Price back into his Don Medina duds. When *PIT* first aired on TV in the 60s, Luana Anders appeared in new framing scenes filmed to extend the running time. Two French shorts based on the Poe story were filmed (one in 1910, the other in 1963), and, more recently, Lance Henriksen, Jeffrey Combs, and Oliver Reed starred in a new version directed by Stuart Gordon and centered around Henriksen as Torquemada.

\*\*\*

The short story "The Fly" appeared in the June 1957 issue of *Playboy*, winning that magazine's Best Fiction Award and going on to be chosen for inclusion in *The Annual of the Year's Best SF*. Curiously, Hollywood was slow to nibble at the bait and the property ended up in the hands of "B" producer Kurt Neumann, who brought it to the attention of mini-movie mogul Robert Lippert. Twentieth Century Fox, the company that distributed Lippert's



LEFT: "Climb upon my knee, Sonny Boy...." Price and Mark Damon in *HOUSE OF USHER*. CENTER: Price gives *THE TINGLER* a suntan. RIGHT: Price is bugged by *THE RETURN OF THE FLY* (Ed Wolff, standing in for Brett Halsey).

low-budget flicks, decided to make the film themselves, but had Lippert's company negotiate the deal for the rights, leaving Fox's involvement unmentioned in order to keep the price low. Michael Rennie rejected a leading role in the film, which began shooting on March 17, 1958. The author of the original story, newsman George Langelaan (now deceased), was pleased with the film, which was screen-written by James Clavell. Less happy was famed radio producer Arch Oboler, who, in September 1958, formally filed notice of his intention to sue Langelaan, Fox, and *Playboy*. Oboler alleged that the idea was derived from his story "Across the Gap", which was dramatized for the radio as early as 1937. Star David Hedison hates the picture more every time he's interviewed, and even Price seems to prefer the schlockier, livelier sequel, *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959). When the 1986 version of *THE FLY* opened, star Jeff Goldblum tickled Price by sending him a note saying, "I loved your *FLY*, hope you like mine."

\*\*\*

The popular Poe poem "The Raven" was previously filmed in 1912, 1915, and 1935 (with Karloff and Lugosi). In 1953, David Diamond, producer of the 1935 *RAVEN*, planned a second adaptation of the poem, hiring David Boehm (the previous film's writer) to develop the screenplay, which would have been set in England in 1845. Wide-screen, Technicolor, and 3 D were considered, and Price was talked about for the top slot, but this *RAVEN* never got off the ground. Richard



Vincent Price joins the long list of actors who have tried to strangle Elisha Cook. Meanwhile, Carol Ohmart takes a nap in the *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*.

Matheson, who couldn't take his AIP/Poe screenplays seriously anymore, turned AIP's 1963 version into a comedy. Corman also thought the new approach a good idea, and the "burlesque" horror film went on to become one of the Poe series' big grossers. Both Corman and Hazel Court distinctly remember the great sense of fun that was felt on the set; Court thinks

that *THE RAVEN* is the best of the Poe films. Richard Matheson has a few reservations, especially concerning the Karloff/Price "duel of the wizards" that caps the film: "It seemed very laborious to me. . . . The effects were what I had written; it was just the way they were presented. Everything seemed too slow."

—Tom Weaver

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# Our Man On Baker Street

## *Maiquet or Not Maiquet*

There was a general "thumbs down" for Granada's MAIGRET series in Britain. Apart from the close attention to period detail—the stories were set in the 50s—the series failed to live up to expectations and the hype. It was, perhaps, too glossy—having a 90s Sheen that prevented the full, authentic whiff of garlic and Gauloises to spill over into our living rooms. The stories were languorous, lacked tension, and, to a large extent, were predictable. The biggest disappointment was Michael Gambon as the eponymous sleuth. He is a superb actor, but he lacked the conviction and charisma necessary to convince in this part; he just wasn't Maigret. At present Granada are unsure whether the proposed series, scheduled to be filmed in 1993, will go ahead.

## *The Last of the Ale?*

Meantime, with the final, last, and ultimate series of INSPECTOR MORSE on the stocks, British television chiefs are desperate to find a suitable replacement for the ratings-winning Oxford detective. The BBC have already tried Margery

Allingham's CAMPION, and failed, and the MISS MARPLES have dried up, so now apparently they're chancing their luck again with Ngabo Marsh's Inspector Roderick Alleyn. Two Christmases ago they produced a "one off" ARTISTS IN CRIME with Simon Williams as a not-100-convincing Alleyn. Now Patrick Malahide is stepping into the inspector's police boots for a second attempt. Also on the BBC this spring, we've seen a new hero detective: RESNICK. He's taken from the realistic and earthy novels by John Harvey. Resnick walks the mean streets of Nottingham, nursing his love for jazz, cats, and several women who don't love him back—he's kind of a Morse with sweaty feet. I suspect we'll see more of this gritty, self-effacing 'tec. In the meantime, David Suchet as Hercule Poirot, complete with egg-shaped head and perfect moustaches, is in Egypt filming MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA for the autumn schedules in Britain.

## *Vamping 'til Ready*

It was delightful to see Peter Cushing again in April. I visited him ostensibly on business. He has written the foreword to my new Sherlock Holmes pastiche, *The Tangled Skein*, and is signing the first 50 copies. I went along with my publisher to arrange the signing. The actor is somewhat frail now, but full of the joys of life. He soon had us all laughing merrily. "Some people call me a has-been", he remarked, with a mischievous twinkle in those splendid blue eyes, "but I say, well, it's better than being a never-was." He did tell me that he had been offered the part of the vicar in the new Granada Holmes film THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, but, sadly, he didn't feel up to the rigors of travelling up to Manchester and suffering the trials and hardships of location filming. It is a terrible pity and a great lost opportunity to have two of our greatest Holmes impersonators in the same film. However, Peter still intends to make his final film this year, HERITAGE OF HORROR, as mentioned in the last edition of *Scarlet Street*.

While on the subject of the grand old man of Hammer, it has come to light that at least four of his Sherlock Holmes programmes, made for the BBC in the late 60s, still exist on videotape. I know: I've seen them! The story given out by the BBC is that the tapes had been wiped—to save space! However, I



can say that THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (in two episodes), THE SIGN OF FOUR, THE BOSCOMBE VALLEY MYSTERY, and THE BLUE CARBUNCLE still exist. Wouldn't it be marvellous if these were generally available? Enthusiasts—start writing to BBC in London now!

## *Musgrave Rituals*

Readers of this esteemed magazine may wish to know of the British Holmes society with which I am involved. The Northern Musgraves Sherlock Holmes Society began in a York coffee shop in England in 1988 with three members, and today has a membership of nearly 300, many of whom reside in the United States. Those lucky enough to live in the U.K. can attend the four meetings we hold annually, but our greatest fame and reputation lie in our publications: two chunky newsletters per year, plus a thick annual journal. Our logo was designed by our first Honorary Member, Peter Cushing. Other Hon. Members include Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, Richard Lancelyn Green, Michael Cox, and Dame Jean Conan Doyle. Membership for 1992 is \$30.00, in dollar notes or a sterling cheque equivalent. We'd be delighted to hear from you. Our membership secretary is John Addy, 23 East Street, Lightcliffe, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 8TU, England. Don't forget to mention *Scarlet Street* in your letter.

—David Stuart Davies



Inspector Morse (John Thaw) ponders another mystery, or perhaps he's considering career options. The faithful Sgt. Lewis (Kevin Whately) stands by.

# **“Ya Dirty Bat!”**

## **Gangsters Meet Vampires**

in

## **John Landis' INNOCENT BLOOD**

by Kevin G. Shinnick

In the 30s and 40s, vampires were fearfully easy to identify: they dressed in formal wear and spoke with Hungarian accents. This summer, director John Landis, who gave us *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* (1981), spills *INNOCENT BLOOD* on our movie screens, in a story that could be subtitled “GOOD-FELLAS MEET DRACULA”.

One of those lucky enough to be chosen by Landis to appear in this flick is actor Vic Noto. You'd never mistake Noto for Lugosi, but you would cast him as a tough guy. In *INNOCENT BLOOD*, he plays just that, a tough guy who has the misfortune to be turned into one of the undead.

The film concerns a modern-day vampire, Marie (Anne Parillaud, star of the 1990 French art-house thriller *LA FEMME NIKITA*, in her American debut), who feeds only on those she feels deserve to die. Unfortunately, she fails to kill gangster Sal Macelli (Robert Loggia), who discovers that he likes being a vampire and starts to turn his own men (including Vic, playing a char-

acter called Tommy), and his lawyer (Don Rickles), into the undead as well. When undercover cop Joe Gennaro (Anthony LaPaglia) has his cover blown, he must run for his life, only to ally himself with Marie to put an end to these mob monsters.

\*\*\*

Most actors might try to impress someone of John Landis' status in the industry, but Noto pretended to mistake screenwriter Michael Wolk for the director. Luckily, Landis thought this was funny, auditioned Vic, and offered him a part on the spot.

After weeks of waiting, during which Vic was fitted for contacts and fangs, he received an urgent call to proceed to Pittsburgh, where the film was being shot.

“I’ll tell you a funny story,” said Noto, smiling broadly. “This movie concerns go-go dancers. I arrive in Pittsburgh, I’m walking down the street, and there are all these massage parlors and ‘live nude girls’... so I figure I’ll go into one of these joints and kill some time. I walk into one place—it says ‘live nude girls’. There’s



*Anne Parillaud is a vampire to die for in INNOCENT BLOOD.*



**Vic Noto shares a hot cup of blood between scenes with co-star Anthony LaPaglia on the set of INNOCENT BLOOD.**

a guy sitting there with a pencil in his ear. It's a printing place! Then I walk into another place. It's a candy store! I found out later that they were all phoney fronts for the movie!"

The hotel in which the cast stayed (The William Penn) housed not only the INNOCENT BLOOD production offices, but also the CITIZEN COHN cast and company. "They're doing more movies in Pittsburgh than they're shooting in New York and Los Angeles combined," claimed Vic.

Working with an actor of Robert Loggia's status was a thrill for Vic, as he has been a fan of the performer for years. "I even told him that I used to watch him on T.H.E. CAT [Loggia's TV series during the 60s, in which he played a cat burglar—Ed.]. He said it was ahead of its time, which it was. He was a nice guy to work with, very quiet."

Asked if he was impressed by Landis after working with him, Vic gave a highly favorable report: "He's something else," said Vic, "He's a big Hollywood guy, but he moves furniture. I mean, he's not on any ego trip. He knows what he's doing... he just

does it. He loves making movies." (Among other things, Landis took a hands-on approach to spraying the actors with blood after a particularly nasty battle of the undead.)

Vic was particularly impressed by Landis's ability to shoot all night and then spend the following day locked in his room editing the film. Vic noted that Landis is the only director he knows who always wears a suit when working, a habit the actor believes Landis picked up from director Alfred Hitchcock.

Asked about the glamour of making movies, Vic emphasized that it is not all fun and games: "We shot all night. Every shot was at night. It was a schedule I couldn't get used to—I don't know how people did it. They pick you up at the hotel at eight o'clock, they bring you to the set—wardrobe, get into make-up, whatever. You leave at seven or eight in the morning. Then when you get back to the hotel, you're so wound up. . . . everybody was going on two to three hours of sleep."

Talking about the film's femme fatale, Vic recalled Anne Perillaud's kindness as well as her talent. After a long night, when Noto's contacts were particularly irritating, the actress brought Noto to her room and gave him a bottle of eye drops from France, which cleared up his irritation instantly.

The make-up, designed by maestro Steve Johnson, sometimes took four hours to apply. Vic did not relish going through it any more than necessary: "We broke for chow about two or three in the morning, and this guy from special effects says, 'Oh, let me take the blood off you.' I said, 'What's the point? Let me eat like this.' Remember those old movies about Hollywood, where you see people eating with cowboy suits on? I used to always wonder. . . ."

With the special lenses in place, Vic was unable to see. He had to be led onto the set and put into position (often by the director), usually leaning against a metal beam placed below camera range. The actor knew that, as long as he touched the beam, he was in focus for the camera, as well as in range of a key light aimed at his eyes to give them an unearthly glow.

Asked whether he would wish for anything new or different in his fantasy-film appearances, Vic said, "Yeah. I wish I didn't always have to die; I would like to be in the sequel." A reminder that vampires have a history of coming back in film followups, even after death, brought a wicked gleam to the actor's eyes—and there was no key light needed.



## NEWS

The critically-acclaimed feature-length premiere episode of **THE FLASH** is speeding to video July 15 on the Warner Home Video label.

Featuring a fast-paced musical score by **BATMAN** composer Danny Elfman and flashy special effects that critics have compared to the best in other contemporary, comic book-based films, the pilot episode of **THE FLASH** is already a major video hit in Europe and other overseas markets.

The 94-minute film of **THE FLASH** also won kudos from the critics here in the U.S. when it first aired on television in 1990. *The Chicago Sun Times* called it "polished and enjoyable—an inviting action/adventure." *People* magazine said its appeal and production values "rank right up there with the film versions of **DICK TRACY** and **BATMAN**," and *The*

## BITE

*Washington Post* agreed that it rated "a 9.5 on the wowie-zowie scale."

Written by Danny Bilson and Paul De Meo, the screenwriting team behind 1991's **THE ROCKETER**, **THE FLASH** stars two-time Emmy Award winner John Wesley Shipp as the fleet-footed Barry Allen, who uses superspeed to shut down a terrorist biker gang. Amanda Pays and **DYNASTY** veteran Michael Nader (as the villainous Pike) co-star.

Note: A second **FLASH** video, combining two episodes starring Mark Hamill as the Trickster, was released to great success in Europe. Currently, there are no plans to release this second video in the States.

—Drew Sullivan

# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE HENTZAU AFFAIR

David Stuart Davies

Ian Henry Publications, 1991.

152 pages—£9.95

Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* is probably best remembered for its several film versions: the classic 1937 production starring Ronald Colman and Madeleine Carroll (already the third PRISONER to reach the screen), the lesser but still sufficiently charming 1952 production starring Stewart Granger and Deborah Kerr, and the abysmal 1979 travesty with Peter Sellers and Lynne Frederick. Hope's novel may not have been totally eclipsed by its celluloid offspring, but mention THE PRISONER OF ZENDA to someone and the response is likely to be: "Isn't that the one in which Colman plays two guys who look alike?" (To which those with a perverse humor may reply, "No, you idiot, that's A TALE OF TWO CITIES!")

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales, on the other hand, needn't rely on their many film translations for immortality. The four novels and 56 short stories are read as avidly today as they were a century ago, and pastiches with the Conan Doyle characters have become something of a cottage industry—producing, more often than not, cottage cheesiness.

Now comes *Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair* by David Stuart Davies, and there's not a whiff of Limburger about it. It's a deft, engrossing adventure involving Holmes and Dr. Watson in events taking place soon after the conclusion of *The Prisoner of Zenda*. When Colonel Sapt comes to London in search of Rudolf Rassendyll, whom he hopes to persuade once again to impersonate Ruritania's simple-minded king, the government representative naturally looks to Sherlock Holmes for aid. Soon, Sapt is murdered, and Holmes and Watson must journey to the Kingdom of Ruritania to save the kidnapped Rassendyll and prevent the villainous Rupert of Hentzau from ascending the throne.

Pastiches seldom have such an authentic ring. The Baker Street milieu is lovingly evoked, Mycroft Holmes and the King of Bohemia put in welcome appearances, and the most difficult part of the entire enterprise—namely, making the background events from *The Prisoner of Zenda* comprehensible to those encountering them for the first time—is managed with a minimum of fuss.

Mystery addicts seeking evidence of Holmes and Watson beyond the Canon can do no better than to start with *Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair*, and for movie addicts there's even an added bonus: the cover sketch of the Great Detective is by none other than Mr. Peter Cushing!

—Richard Valley

### 100 GREAT DETECTIVES

Edited and introduced

by Maxim Jakubowski

Carroll & Graf, 1991.

255 pages—\$18.95

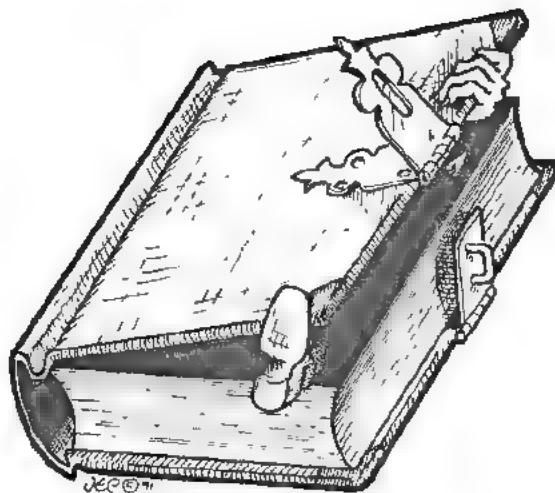
Imagine, if you will, a sumptuous, mouth-watering buffet, a banquet not to be rivaled anywhere, with each dish cooked by a master chef. Some of the dishes are familiar, some you've heard of but have never tried, and some are complete surprises. You won't try everything, of course. Some of these treats seem too spicy, too bland, or too exotic for your palate. Still, it's a feast fit for a king.

Sorry, this book is not that banquet—but it is the menu for same, the bill of fare, with a description of each item so that you can make an intelligent choice, something I would have greatly appreciated at my first encounter with French cuisine.

Mr. Jakubowski has corralled a large group of authors and critics, and given us their personal detective favorites. The list, as he admits, is idiosyncratic. I missed some old friends, such as Judge Dee, and so, probably, will you. Some of the choices may delight you, others may mystify or appall you, but the variety is stunning.

These exemplars of the art of detection include men, women, and one whose very gender is a mystery. Some are featured in long series; some have only one or two books to their credit. They are professionals, amateurs, and outlaws; brilliant, plodding, logical, scientific, and intuitive. They come in all shapes, sizes, ages, and conditions. Golden-age giants are here, as well as film-noir icons, and some who defy easy cataloguing. They span the world, being Chinese, Black, Native American, British, French, Swiss, Italian, and Indian.

Brother Baskerville is here from *The Name of the Rose*, as well as Jack Crawford, the able adversary of Hannibal



Lecter. The personalities of these investigators are as varied as their backgrounds and methods of work. Placid, hyperactive, pillars of integrity, grittily corrupt, full of hilarity or morbidity, they all detect.

The writing styles of these essays are likewise diverse, of course, ranging from the eloquent to the impenetrable. A few authors tell you more about themselves than about their subjects; others compose biographies, amusing letters, or character studies. One writes a small scene for his favorite. I was amused when, in an essay on C. Auguste Dupin, Michael Eaton announced, apropos of nothing, that "nostalgia" is an anagram of "lost again". A couple of choices for favorite detective are frankly bizarre ("Soeur Van Folly" gives us 64 Clevelands from a series that doesn't even exist!) and a few are deadly dull (Ann Harts' pedestrian biography of Hercule Poirot, all facts, no heart), but isn't that what makes a choice buffet really choice?

I recommend keeping pen and paper handy to jot down the names of detectives who most intrigue you. I did, and I was surprised at the length of my list when I was done. For anyone who is interested in broadening their mystery horizon, or in ferreting out the obscure, this is a "must have" book.

—Ken Schachtman

### INTERVIEWS WITH B SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR MOVIE MAKERS

Tom Weaver

McFarland & Company, Inc., 1988.

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.

413 pages—\$29.95

Tom Weaver strikes again! The fearless critic/interviewer par excellence has graced the pages of *Starlog*, *Fangoria*, *Filmfax*, and *Scarlet Street* with his sometimes loving, oft-times scathing views on everything from (his opinion!) Bela Lugosi's lack of talent to (his opinion!) the superiority of Universal's horror output

over Hammer's. Considerate of those for whom reading comes unnaturally, Weaver can often be seen in person, happily taking potshots at fellow panelists at conventions such as Fenex. Regardless of whether one agrees with Weaver—and I'm sure there must be one who agrees

with him—the man knows how to stir up a hornet's nest.

Weaver's movie critiques may be likened to a stroll through a field littered with land mines, but his interviews, in which the field is given over to his subjects, are on less volatile ground. The writer's visits

with the greats and near-greats of film-dom, gathered together in *Interviews with B Science Fiction and Horror Movie Makers*, make for much more than mere pleasant reading; they perform an inestimable service by placing on record the reminiscences and opinions of those who were there when it happened. To the novice who asks, "Those who were where when what happened?", the partial answer is "Those who were there when the Wolf Man first tiptoed through his fog-drenched forest. Those who were there when the Creature from the Black Lagoon broke loose at Marineland. Those who were there when the Hideous Sun Demon caught one ray too many."

Weaver knows the right questions to ask, and gets the right people to answer them. *Interviews* introduces us to such diverse writers, producers, directors, and stars as John Ashley, Susan Cabot, Robert Clarke, Reginald LeBorg, Gene Corman, Curt Siodmak, Beverly Garland, Ib J. Melchior, and Gloria Talbott, who tell us everything we want to know about PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, THE HAUNTED STRANGLER, IT CONQUERED THE WORLD, and THE PRE-MATURE BURIAL, among dozens of other fright favorites.

*Scarlet Street* scribes John and Michael Brunas, who wrote *Universal Horrors* with Weaver, are on board here as research associates. (As editor-in-chief of this magazine, I know full well that any help offered by a Brunas should be eagerly accepted.) As an added bonus, the book is stuffed with photographs, many quite rare, and it's indexed for easy reference. Like the films in which Weaver's subjects appeared, *Interviews with B Science Fiction and Movie Makers* is an experience not to be missed.

—RV

#### WHOO?

Richard Hoyt  
Tor Books, 1991.  
214 pages—\$17.95.

Private investigator John Denson is hired by a lawyer in Washington state to help defend a young couple arrested on a charge of growing marijuana. Driving to his hotel, he meets a beautiful ornithologist, Jenny MacIvar, who is involved in a local controversy surrounding the lumber industry and the endangered spotted owl.

Denson's partner, Willie Prettybird, tells Denson that he has been chosen to find the killer of a spotted owl found squashed on a local highway (shades of TWIN PEAKS). Then the lovely Jenny is found murdered, and it's only a matter of time before Denson cuts away the dead wood and connects the three cases.

Denson finds himself tramping the dark and eerie forests in the middle of the



Art by Allen Koszowski ©1991

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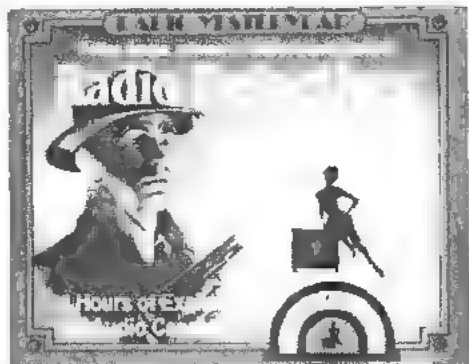
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night, working for and partying with Native Americans, exposing corrupt officials, looking for a stolen owl corpse, dealing with disgruntled lumberjacks, and matching wits with a cold-blooded killer.

The novel addresses the issue of the lumber industry versus the ecology movement. Do we lose jobs and income to save owls, or do we continue to cut timber and destroy our ecological system? That's the one question Denson can't answer.

WHOO? is filled with likeable characters who are neither all good nor all bad, much like real life. Who will enjoy this mystery? Almost all mystery fans.

—Sue Svehla

#### IRENE AT LARGE

Carole Nelson Douglas

Tor Books, 1992.

320 pages—\$19.95

In the desolate wasteland that is Afghanistan, on the eve of the British/Afghan battle of Maiwand in July 1880, meet Cobra and Tiger—and a coil of treachery that spans 10 years and two continents is unleashed.

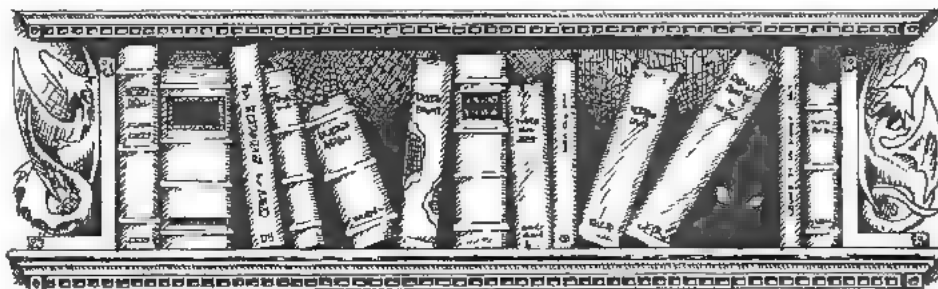
Pursuer and pursued, the two don't meet again until *Irene's* closing pages. Before that, the case briefly touches such luminaries as Sarah Bernhardt, the Empress of All the Russias, and Toulouse-Lautrec. It involves a rather restive Norton household (Nell is even idly considering feeding some of Irene's less-attractive jewelry to Casanova, the parrot) in a mystery that fails—quite literally—at Nell's feet, in the form of an Englishman in Oriental garb, come to Paris from India in search of a "Dr. Watson" who tended him after Maiwand, and whose life he believes to be in danger. Before the Nortons get all the details, he vanishes—and the search is on.

The Penelope Huxleigh who picks up the narrative of *Irene at Large* in 1889 has changed since she met Irene Adler in 1881. Although she's still the parson's daughter, Nell's friendship with Irene and Godfrey Norton has led her into situations in which no respectable woman could be quite comfortable; yet she's survived, perhaps even grown.

Stepping a bit out of Irene's shadow, Nell becomes aware of the changes she's undergone. To me, her growth is representative of the success of this volume: the relationship among the three main characters has matured, and in *Irene at Large* we get to know them better than ever before. They're a delightful bunch.

*Irene at Large*, the third in the series by Carole Nelson Douglas, touches on an affair previously documented by Dr. John H. Watson. It clarifies a few points troubling to scholars, yet leaves many intriguing questions still unanswered. Let's hope that the next installment in this delightful series is not long delayed.

—Sally Jane Gellert



## Seems Like Old Crimes

#### SPICY DETECTIVE STORIES

Compiled and edited by Tom Mason

Malibu Graphics, Inc., 1989.

96 pages—\$7.95

#### SPICY HORROR STORIES

Edited by Tom Mason

Malibu Graphics, Inc., 1990.

106 pages—\$9.95

#### SPICY MYSTERY STORIES

Edited by Tom Mason

Malibu Graphics, Inc., 1990.

112 pages—\$9.95

#### SPICY WESTERN STORIES

Edited by Tom Mason

Malibu Graphics, Inc., 1989.

114 pages—\$9.95

Malibu Graphics, a California-based comic-book company, has reprinted a collection of old pulp stories from the *Spicy Detective* magazine of the 1930s. These tales deal mostly with tough, hard-boiled detectives and the cold, cynical world in which they live. In addition to *Detective*, Malibu has also republished *Spicy Horror*, *Mystery*, and *Western Stories*.

With an introduction by pulp historian John Wooley, *Spicy Detective* comes complete with a "detective dictionary" featuring such words as *gat* (a gun), *jack* (money), and *bulls* (uniformed policemen). Phrases like these are sprinkled throughout such tales as Robert Leslie Bellem's "Temporary Corpse", an enjoyable Dan Turner episode about a dead man who apparently rises at night to scare his unfaithful widow.

Although the quality of the writing may not be on the same level as Hemingway's, its breathless, lurid style is well suited to the two-fisted yarn. "One Thousand Witnesses", by William B. Rainey, moves along at a frantic pace as its protagonist, a newly minted detective, must ignore his biggest vice—women—to solve a murder.

A word of warning here: as creative director Tom Mason points out in his foreword, the pulps were a field dominated by men; the magazines were read mainly by men. Therefore, women were restricted to being either an innocent victim who had to be rescued or, as in Rainey's tale, an evil seductress willing to lead our hero astray.

*Spicy Horror Stories* is mostly filled with sadistic and utterly graphic scenes of murder, dismemberment, and torture. Of course, women are usually on the receiving end of the violence, but not always. "The House Where Evil Lived", by Russell Gray, is recommended for simply being a decent haunted-house story. It is also different from the rest in that it is told from the heroine's point of view. Also worth noting is "Chorines For Death's Ballet", by Donald Graham. Although it can be quite grisly at times, the Broadway setting, with a madman killing young starlets, is reminiscent of *The Phantom of the Opera*, only without the Gothic trappings.

Virtually every horror tale involves some kind of supernatural menace, yet the reader is usually cheated at the end. This book reminds me of the old Scooby Doo

## BARRY R. LEVIN SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY LITERATURE, A.B.A.A.

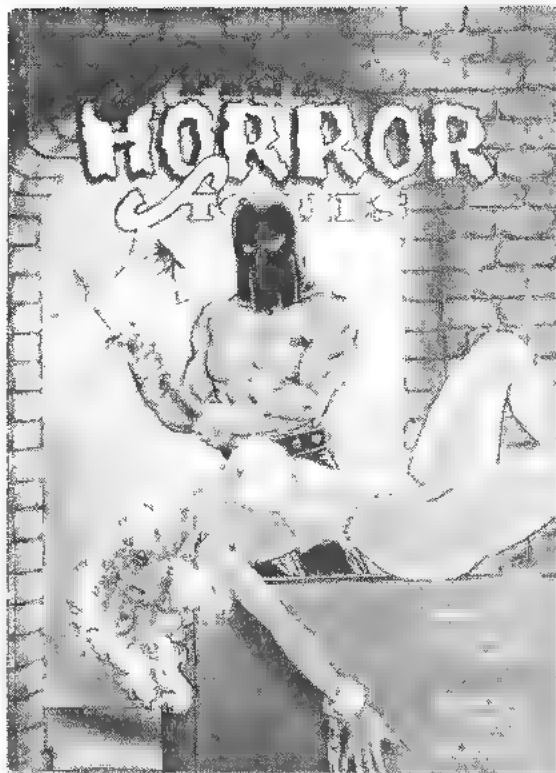
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cartoons I used to watch as a child. No matter how scary those stories were, at the end the bogeyman of the week was always revealed to be nothing more than a common thief out to con somebody. This is the case with *Spicy Horror Stories*, with the exception of Donald Graham's "Satan Lives For My Love", in which a slight thread of the supernatural cannot be so easily explained away.

Ironically, *Spicy Mystery* contains all the monsters and other assorted weirdness; even though its cover (depicting a bathing-suit clad woman holding a smoking gun, while a dead man floats in the pool behind her) suggests that it is a sequel to *Spicy Detective*. "Princess of Dreams", by Robert Leslie Bellem, reads like a NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET movie. Written in 1938, the story deals with the concept that, if you are killed in your dream, you die in real life. "The Door On The Stairs", by Charles A. Baker, Jr., is another good tale, concerning time travel. Although the climax takes place in a torture chamber, it is not as overly lurid as its companion stories.



Finally, there's *Spicy Western Stories*, which takes its plots from the strait-laced cowboy movies of by-gone Saturday matinees and jazzes them up with sex and violence. My favorite story here is "The Moving Finger", by Edwin Truett. The title character, who is also the narrator, is a quirky sheriff who would rather read than deal with any big problems in his one-horse town. Outlaws would send him advance word of their arrival, giving him enough time to pack up a bunch of books to read by the river for a few days, returning only when the bandits were long gone. Much to his dismay, however, he finds himself wrapped up in a deadly love triangle.

Of all the books, I would recommend *Spicy Detective* and *Spicy Mystery*. Keep in mind that the stories I chose are not the best of the lot; they are simply better than the *Spicy* average. Remember, too, that these tales were not known for the quality of their writing, but they are vivid enough to offer a few hours of sultry, sordid fun.

—Sean Farrell

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## PRICE

Continued from page 60

VP: I read something the other day—that we are not only economically impoverished, but culturally impoverished as well. I think it's true and it has a lot to do with why we're economically impoverished. If we don't make cars as good as the Japanese, it's a matter of "know-how", isn't it? And we don't know how. I've just learned why we can't sell cars to Japan—they drive on the opposite side of the road than we do. We send them cars with the steering wheel on the wrong side for them. Why should they buy them? It's just ridiculous—they'd have to get an American chauffeur with one slant eye!

SS: A final question: How would you like to be remembered?

VP: I would like to be remembered by something I strongly believe in—that there is a great difference between earning a living and knowing how to live. Well, I think an awful lot of people earn a living to put it in their bellies. It should be put in your head. When you get to old age, it is the experience of life that is really the only thing that sustains you. I find now that I'm a bit crippled with a lot of physical problems; I don't go out much. The thing that sustains me is what I've learned about how to live—that I really don't have to go to a restaurant three times a week to be seen

somewhere because I don't want to be seen somewhere. I would rather have a good meal at home that I cooked because I studied cooking. You know, I went to Venice about four years ago because I wanted to learn Northern Italian cooking. I've studied cooking my whole life because I think that that's one of the most important things man has achieved—to know what to do with food. But most people kill it. They don't have any sort of sensitivity about food or drink or anything else. So anyway, that's what I mean—to learn how to live. And you pray to God that you will be able to earn enough money to do that.

SS: Well, speaking for the entire staff of Scarlet Street, you have always been one of our heroes. You have led a

truly remarkable life. Thank you for your thoughts on it.

VP: I've enjoyed it enormously.

## SHEPHERD

Continued from page 63

was vague. I discovered the hook on the word "will" in the song, and was able then to use it as Ligeia. I am pleased with that scene; it works well. The changing of key as I sing happens because it was compiled from different takes, but it gives a strange, eerie effect, which I like.

SS: In retrospect, are there any elements that you would change in the film?

ES: Perhaps we could clarify more vividly the ebb and flow of Ligeia's spirit into and out of Rowena's body. It was difficult to make clear exactly what was happening, and I am not sure that we altogether succeeded. I would like to have had the chance to develop Ligeia more fully. But nevertheless her presence is felt.

SS: Is there anything that you, personally, would like a viewer to be aware of while watching *TOMB OF LIGEIA*?

ES: I would advise viewers to see the film on video cassette, or preferably in the cinema. On TV, very often the final nightmare/dream sequence, which predicts what is to come, is cut. Without it, a whole emotional dimension is missing, as Rowena realizes her worst fears coming true. It spoils the rhythm of the climax of the film if we do not have déjà vu. It also makes clearer, I believe, the almost fatal wound when Rowena cuts her hand after smashing the mirror. Aside from that, just open your heart to a good story and let your imagination go.

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## MOULDER-BROWN

Continued from page 71

**SS:** In *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* you were the hero, and rather a young one for a Hammer film. Was the part written with an older actor in mind?

**JMB:** I think it must have been, because the boy was very young. The girl playing opposite was Lynne Frederick, with whom I've done two projects. We

did *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* and then went on to do *COLLETTE: THE RIPENING SEED*, which was a rather beautiful love story with Gayle Hunnicut. *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* was the first time I worked with Lynne; we were both very young, and she looked angelic. I was rather horrified at the idea of doing a Hammer Horror. I'd just done this extraordinary art film, so it was a shock to me to come to the set of *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*; it was a completely different style of acting. I found it very, very difficult to take seriously. Of course, in order to do that sort of film, you have to take it terribly seriously, and it takes more hard work than doing a *DEEP END*. I've seen some wonderful vampire films. To me the Hammer vampire films are classics, but not because they necessarily involve or engage the audience in real characters or a real threat.

**SS:** What was the Hammer studio like?

**JMB:** We were working on the sets and at Black Heath, which is near where they did the Hammer films. We worked in the village that was built on their back lot; it appeared in many if not all of their films.

**SS:** Hammer Films had relatively small sets, and everything was done rather quickly. They weren't technicians so much as craftsmen.

**JMB:** That's right; they were absolute craftsmen. For me, it was a craft that was completely alien. I'd just come from *FIRST LOVE*, thinking, time, discovery process, discovery of character. I'd gone to *DEEP END*: improvisation, time to find the nuances in everything you were doing. Hammer was entirely different. You had very adept actors—Thorley Walters, for instance, who'd appeared in many of the Hammer horrors, and Laurence Payne, who was a wonderful actor—you had very adept and professional actors in a genre they understood. For me, it was playing against a style and type, what I thought acting was about.

**SS:** Would you have preferred to play Emil, the lead vampire?

**JMB:** Funnily enough, the vampire Emil was an actor I had seen in a television production as a 14-year-old. I thought he was a wonderful actor; I remember watching him on television and saying to my father, "God! This young actor's fantastic." And then suddenly to meet him! I thought he was marvelous as the vampire. Again, it was something extraordinary. I thought it

**SS:** Tell us something about your *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* co-stars, such as Adrienne Corri and Anthony Corlan.

**JMB:** Tony Corlan! Well, Tony Corlan was the young actor I had admired so much, and whom I thought was absolutely wonderful in the film. We became very good friends and have remained friends for years. He's since changed his name to Anthony Higgins. He was in *THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT* and

he's a marvelous actor, and a very attractive young man. Stunning-looking, with a wonderful presence. Adrienne Corri was off the wall. She was slightly batty.

**SS:** She appeared in *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* later. She played the woman raped by Malcolm McDowell and...

**JMB:** ...and his gang, right. They were all so good in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*. And that's what I missed. I didn't enjoy it as much as I could have done if I'd realized the quality of the acting and also the film. I think it was an excellent film of its type.

**SS:** Did Hammer use actual circus performers?

**JMB:** They did. Another person on the film was Skip Martin, who played the dwarf. He was a lovely actor; we became friends for years and had a very close friendship. I actually lived with Christina Paul, one of

the girls who was in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, as a result of making that film. She was in *DEEP END* as well. She was a Polish actress and a friend of Skolli's—that's why she was in *DEEP END*—and she appeared in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* as one of the victims of the vampire. That film was responsible for a lot of things that happened in my life, in a way.

**SS:** Who else can you tell us about?

**JMB:** Lala Ward, a very fine actress; I think it was her first film. Another boy, Robin Summerfield; it was his first film. He went on to marry Peter O'Toole's ex-wife, Sian Phillips. Laurence Payne, who'd played Hamlet, had a glass eye as a result of the television series *SEXTON BLAKE*, which featured a character similar to Sherlock Holmes. He'd lost his eye during a sword fight. He was a wonderful man; the youngest Hamlet of his time. It was an extraordinary cast. Robert Young had to get the film in within a six-week shooting schedule.

**SS:** Wasn't that typical of Hammer?

**JMB:** That's right. And if he got it in on time, he would be awarded a bonus. I remember there were scenes in which I was



John Moulder-Brown and Lynne Frederick were the young lovers—and practically the sole survivors—of Hammer's *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*.

was extraordinary that he'd adapted this wonderful style of acting to a vampire film. In a way that helped me, to see him going through that process. I always love and prefer to play the villain. Villains are great fun to play; heroes are ghastly.

**SS:** Especially in the Hammer films...

**JMB:** The young heroes were always rather wet, drippy, English types. You know—round-faced, boyish yet manly, and really not much fun to play. Some of the dialogue was extraordinary to hear, but if done with belief and sincerity it worked entirely. I remember one particular scene: someone had to say, "In the name of Jesus! Leave us!" Now that struck me as hilarious. I don't know why, but it tickled my funny bone. The only difference between *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* and other Hammer horrors was that it was directed by a very young director. I think that's why I was cast; he liked my performance in *DEEP END*. His name was Robert Young. It was his first feature, although he'd directed, I think, shorts and also adverts. He cast *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* in an off-beat way. I wasn't really old enough to play the part, but that was his choice and his casting

© 1972, 20th Century-Fox Film Corp.

finding it very difficult to keep a straight face. I'd say at the end of the shot, "Can we do that again, because I think I was holding on by the seat of my pants?" And he'd say "No," and we'd go on to the next shot. So I learned very quickly that you had to get it right, which is a way of acting I like. The other actors were very strict; you couldn't emote if they were giving their lines. It was almost an old-style Hollywood type of acting, in which each actor does their bit and no actor is allowed to move or emote or cough or interrupt what they're saying. So the whole process was difficult; I lost the fun of it. I lost the enjoyment of it, sadly. But I think the film was excellent. I think I was absolutely lousy in the film. I think I was terrible; I should never have worked again after it. Luckily, I went on immediately to do KING, QUEEN, KNAVE.

## Next: Sleeping Murders and Victorian Scandals

### VICKERS

*Continued from page 43*

**YV:** I did! I did! I talked them into going one night after the show.

**SS:** What show were you doing?

**YV:** I was in THE GANG'S ALL HERE with Melvyn Douglas, E.G. Marshall, and Arthur Hill. They were great guys, and they would tell these terrific stories about their early days in the theatre. It was great fun to hear all those stories. I got the nerve to ask them to see GIANT LILIES and they went, several of them. We went over to 42nd Street, and the first thing I did was tell the manager I didn't like the poster he had up. And this little guy looked at me and said, "Don't you worry about it. I fix it and it will be just fine." He was kind of angry with me. Anyway, I laughed and we went in and had a ball. We just giggled and carried on and they loved it. They understood that it was fun and entertaining and they liked it.

**SS:** You weren't recognized in the theatre?

**YV:** No, the manager didn't know. I guess he thought I was just some woman off the street, yelling at him. He got mad at me.

**SS:** We're sure you were much better dressed in the theatre than you were in the movie

**YV:** I hope so!



*Love in a tub: Jane Asher and John Moulder-Brown in DEEP END.*

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*In Brixton Road, this morning, a plain gold wedding ring found in the roadway between the White Hart Tavern and Holland Grove. Apply Dr. Watson, 221B, Baker Street between eight and nine this evening.*

# DARTING SHOT

The essential element of true horror, as opposed to so-called horror, is fear. Fear of the unknown and the unknowable.

BORIS KARLOFF

Evil's got a smell of its own. A child can spot it. I know. . . . I lived with it. . . . Yeah, I know it when I smell it.

PHILIP YORDAN AND ROBERT WYLER  
*Detective Story*

Every murder strikes at the heart of civilization; it is an attack on all mankind.

RAE FOLEY  
*Fatal Lady*

Murder victims have no claim to privacy.  
JAY DRATLER, SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN,  
AND BETTY REINHARDT  
*Laura*

Murder is always good copy, particularly when it happens to the rich and venal.  
LUCILLE FLETCHER  
*Eighty Dollars to Stamford*

Matilda Briggs was not the name of a young woman, Watson. . . . It was a ship

which was associated with the giant rat of Sumatra, a story for which the world is not yet prepared. But what do we know about vampires? . . . Make a long arm, Watson, and see what V has to say.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
*The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*

One must live life so that it cannot be caged behind mere dates.

CAROLE NELSON DOUGLAS  
*Irene at Large*

It's lavish, but I call it home.

JAY DRATLER, SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN,  
AND BETTY REINHARDT  
*Laura*

There is a man out there who is killing young women. He is completely unscrupulous. I want to catch him.

ANTHONY MINGHELLA  
*Driven to Distraction*

Perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart.

EDGAR ALLAN POE  
*The Black Cat*

If there is a power of God, it follows that there must be a power of evil. And I've seen evil. Years ago, Hollywood used to be one of the most evil places on earth. No, I'm not joking.

VINCENT PRICE

Love is eternal. It has been the strongest motivation for human action throughout centuries. Love is stronger than life. It reaches beyond the dark shadow of death.

JAY DRATLER, SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN,  
AND BETTY REINHARDT  
*Laura*

Death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship, which struggles on in the survivor's mind toward some resolution which it may never find.

ROBERT ANDERSON  
*I Never Sang for My Father*

Utterly rotten individuals are rare. . . . As for the rest, I tried to prevent them from doing too much harm and to see to it that they paid for the harm they had already done.

GEORGES SIMENON  
*Maigret's Memoirs*

*Quotations compiled by Sally Jane Geilert*

Send us your quotes! Please be sure to credit them properly; then look for them in future issues.

## MYSTERY PHOTO

Terry Witmer correctly identified last issue's MYSTERY PHOTO and wrote:

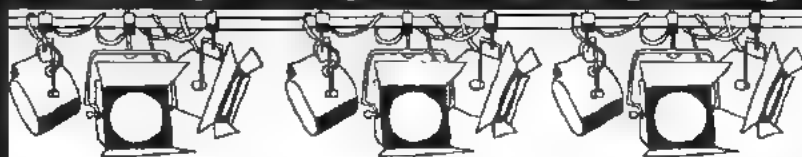
The still is from *THE SKY DRAGON* (1949) and shows, left to right, Joel Marston as Co-Pilot Don Blake, Noel Neill as Stewardess Jane Marshall, and Milburn Stone as Captain Tim Norton. Marston, whose film career seems to have begun in 1949, became a familiar face in the 50s and early 60s as a member of director Andrew Stone's stock company of character actors who appeared in the string of melodramas Stone did in those years. Marston was in—as memory serves at this moment—*JULIE*, *THE DECKS RAN RED*, *THE LAST VOYAGE*, and *RING OF FIRE*.

Now, on to this issue's photo. No, it's not Laurel and Hardy after sex-change operations, it's—well, you tell us. Just the name of the movie, not the names of the actresses, will get you a one-year subscription. Correct entry with earliest postmark wins.



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A TASTE OF HONEY (BRITISH)	DORA DRYAN, RITA TUSHINGHAM	1962
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	WALTER HUSTON, UNA MERKE	1930
ADVENTURES OF TARTU	ROBERT DONAT, VALERIE HOBSON	1943
ALFERS	CHARLES BOYER, HEDY LAMARR	1938
AMAZING MR. X, THE	TURHAN BEY, LYNN BARR	
AMPE, THE	CATHY O'DONNELL	1946
AMPE MAN, THE	BORIS KARLOFF	1940
BAT WHISPERS, THE	BELA LUGOSI	1943
BEHIND THE MASK	CHESTER MORRIS, JINA MERKE	1930
BEHIND THE MASK	KARLE RICHMOND, BARBARA REED	1946
BEHIND THE MASK	BORIS KARLOFF, CONSTANCE CUMMINGS	1932
BELLS, THE (SILENT)	LIONEL BARRYMORE, BORIS KARLOFF	1928
BENEATH THE 12 MILE REEF	ROBERT WAGNER, TERRY MOORE	1953
BIRD OF PARADISE	DOLORES DEL RIO, JOEL MACREA	1932
BIRTH OF A LEGEND & THE VIOLIN MAKER		
OF CREMONA (SILENT)	A PORTRAIT OF MARY PICKFORD	1909
BIRTH OF A NATION (SILENT)	LILLIAN GISH	1915
BLACK PIRATE, THE (SILENT)	DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS SR., BILLIE DOVE	1926
BLACK AND SAND (SILENT)	RUDOLPH VALENTINO, LILA LEE, NITA NALDI	1922
BROKEN BLOSSOMS (SILENT)	RICHARD BARTHELMESS, LILLIAN GISH	1919
CALL HER SAVAGE	CLARA BOW	1932
CAUGHT PLASTERED	WHEELER & WOOLSEY	1932
CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN	BELA LUGOSI, EDWARD LOWE	1932
CHILD BRIDE - CAMP FILM	SHIRI FYNMILLS, BOB BOY, NGFR	1939
DANGER LIGHTS	EDWARD O'BRIEN, PAMELA BRITTON	1949
DIARY OF A HIGH SCHOOL BRIDE	JEAN ARTHUR, ROBERT ARMSTRONG	1930
DIXIANA	ANITA SANDS, RONALD FOSTER	1959
DOG EAT DOG	BEBE DANIELS, EVERETT MARSHALL	1930
DON Q, SON OF ZORRO, (SILENT)	JAYNE MANSFIELD, CAMERON MITCHELL	1965
DR. Jekyll & MR. HYDE (SILENT)	DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, MARY ASTOR	1925
EAGLE, THE (SILENT)	JOHN BARRYMORE, NITA NALDI	1925
EMPEROR JONES	RUDOLPH VALENTINO	1925
ERIC THAT NEVER WAS, THE	(BLACK ARTISTS) PAUL ROBESON	1933
	THE STORY OF THE UNFINISHED FILM:	
EVERGREEN	L. CLAUDIUS	1965
FACE IN THE FOG, A	JESSIE MATTHEWS, JEANNIE MALE	1934
FARMER'S WIFE, THE (SILENT)	JANE WITHERS, PAUL KELLY	1944
FISHERMAN'S WHARF	DIR. ALFRED HITCHCOCK	
	JAMESON THOMPSON, LILLIAN HALL DAVIS	1928
FLYING FISHMAN, THE	BOBBY BREEN, LEO CARRILLO &	
FOG ISLAND	SLICKER THE SEAL	1940
FREE TO LOVE (SILENT)	DOUGLAS "WRONG WAY" CORRIGAN	1939
GANGS, INC.	GEORGE ZUCCO, LIONEL ATWILL	1945
GENERAL, THE (SILENT)	CLARA BOW	1925
GHOSTS ON THE LOOSE	AJAN LADD, JOAN WOODBURY	1941
GHOUL, THE	BUSTER KEATON	1927
HAPPY GO, LOVELY	EAST SIDE KIDS	1943
HE WALKED BY NIGHT	BORIS KARLOFF, CEDRIC HARDWICKE,	
H. HADDLE	ERNEST THESIGER	1933
H. HADDLE	VERA ALLEN, DAVID NIVEN	1951
H. HADDLE	RICHARD BASEHART, SCOTT BRADY	1946
H. HADDLE	DEAN JAGGER, ADOLPHE MENJOU	1943
H. HADDLE	JOHN CARROLL STEFF, DUNA	1935
H. HADDLE	LLOYD BRIDGES, FRANK LOVEJOY	1949
H. HADDLE	WHEELER & WOOLSEY	1930
H. HADDLE	LON CHANEY, PATSY RUTH MILLER	1923
H. HADDLE	BRIAN DONLEVY, ELLA RAINS	1949
H. HADDLE	JENNIFER JONES, MONTGOMERY CLIFT	1954
H. HADDLE	LILLIAN GISH, CONSTANCE TALMADGE	1916
H. HADDLE	BELA LUGOSI, ANN YOUNG	1941
H. HADDLE	JESSIE MATTHEWS, ROBERT YOUNG	1936
H. HADDLE	JOHNNY MACK BROWN	1929
H. HADDLE	CONRAD VEIDT, FRANK VOSPER	1934
H. HADDLE	ALFRED HITCHCOCK DIR.	1929
H. HADDLE	BUSTER CRABBE	1933
H. HADDLE	(BLACK ARTISTS) PAUL ROBESON	1937
H. HADDLE	GRETA GARBO	1929

TITLE	STARRING	DATE
ILAC TIME (SILENT)	GARY COOPER	1928
LOVE AMONG THE MILLIONAIRES	CLARA BOW	1930
MAN ON THE EIFFEL TOWER THE	CHARLES LAUGHTON, FRANCHOT TONE	1940
MAATRAP	(SILENT) CLARA BOW	1926
MEETING AT MIDNIGHT	SIDNEY TOLER, MANTAN MORELAND	1941
MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY (SILENT)	JAMES KIRKWOOD SR., LILA LEE	1927
MY OWN EXECUTIONER	BURGESS MEREDITH, KILDORN MOORE	1947
MONSTER, THE (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1925
MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING	PETER LORRE, GEORGE SANDERS	1930
MY BEST GIRL (SILENT)	MARY PICKFORD	
MY LADY OF WHIMS (SILENT)	CHARLES "BUDDY" ROGERS	1927
MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, THE (SILENT)	CLARA BOW	1925
NIGHT MY NUMBER CAME UP, THE	LIONEL BARRYMORE, JANE DALY	1929
NO LIMIT	MICHAEL REDGRAVE	1955
OLD DARK HOUSE, THE	CLARA BOW	1931
	BORIS KARLOFF,	
	MELVIN DOUGLAS LAUGHTON	1932
	BERT WHEELER, ROBERT WOOLSEY	1931
PEACH O' HENO	MARY PICKFORD	1917
POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL, THE (SILENT)	CLARA BOW	1925
PRIMROSE PATH, THE (SILENT)	JOHN REARD, SHEILA RYAN	1947
RAILROAD	DIR. ALFRED HITCHCOCK	
RING THE (SILENT)	CARL BRISSON, LILLIAN HALL DAVIS	1927
	DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS SR.	1922
ROBIN HOOD (SILENT)		
SALLY OF THE SAWDUST (SILENT)	W.C. FIELDS, CAROL DEMPSTER	1925
aka POPPY	ROD CAMERON, YVONNE DE CARLO	1945
SALOME, WHERE SHE DANCED	PAUL ROBESON, LESLIE BANKS	1935
SANDERS OF THE RIVER (BLACK ARTISTS)	CLARA BOW	1929
SATURDAY NIGHT KID, THE	RANDOLPH SCOTT, HELEN GAHAGAN	1935
SHE	RUDOLPH VALENTINO, AGNES AYRES	1921
SHEIK THE (SILENT)	CHARLES STARRETT, ROBERT WARWICK	1935
SHOT IN THE DARK, A	WHEELER & WOOLSEY	1936
SILLY BILLIES	RUDOLPH VALENTINO, VILMA BANKY,	
SON OF THE SHEIK (SILENT)	AGNES AYRES	1926
SONS OF STEEL	CHARLES STARRETT	1934
SPARROWS (SILENT)	MARY PICKFORD	1926
SPEAKEASY	JIMMY DURANTE, HEDDA HOPPER,	
	BUSTER KEATON	1932
SPEEDY (SILENT)	HAROLD LLOYD	1928
SUNNY	ANNE NEAGLE, RAY BOLGER	1941
SUNRISE (SILENT)	JANET GAYNOR, GEORGE O'BRIEN	1927
SWAN, THE (SILENT)	ADOLPH MENJOU, RICHARDO CORTEZ	1925
TELL IT TO THE MARINES (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1927
THAT CERTAIN THING (SILENT)	DIR. FRANK CAPRA	
THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL	VILMA BANKY, RALPH GRAVES	1928
THIRD MAN, THE	JOHN GARFIELD, DEAD END KIDS	1939
THURSDAY'S CHILD	OLSON WELLES, JOSEPH COTTEN	1949
TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL	STEWART GRANGER, SALLY ANN HOWES	1943
TRUE TO THE NAVY	RICHARD DIX, LESLIE BANKS	1935
TWO SENORITAS FROM CHICAGO	CLARA BOW	1930
UNDASTENED WOMAN, THE (SILENT)	JOAN DAVIS, JINX FALKENBURG	1943
UNHOLY THREE, THE (SILENT)	THEA BARA	1925
UNHOLY THREE, THE (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1925
UNHOLY THREE, THE (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1930
WALKING BACK (SILENT)	SUE CAROL	1928
WAY DOWN EAST (SILENT)	LILLIAN GISH, RICHARD BARTHELMESS	1920
WEST OF ZANZIBAR (SILENT)	LON CHANEY, LIONEL BARRYMORE	1929
WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1928
WILD BOYS OF THE ROAD	FRANKIE DARRO, ROCHELLE HUDSON	1933
WILD PARTY, THE	CLARA BOW	1929
WHERE EAST IS EAST (SILENT)	LON CHANEY	1929
WIZARD OF OZ, THE (SILENT)	LARRY SEMON, OLIVER HARDY	1925

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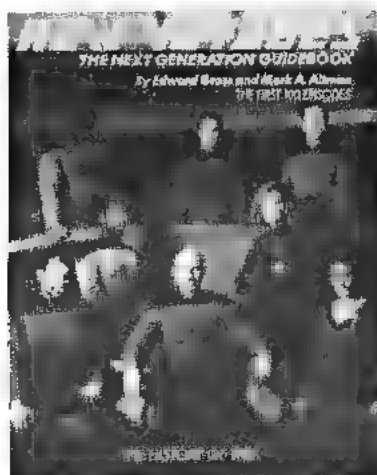
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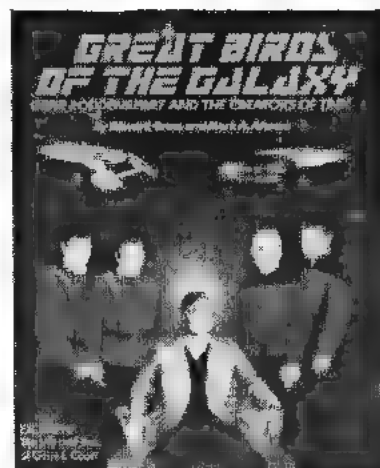
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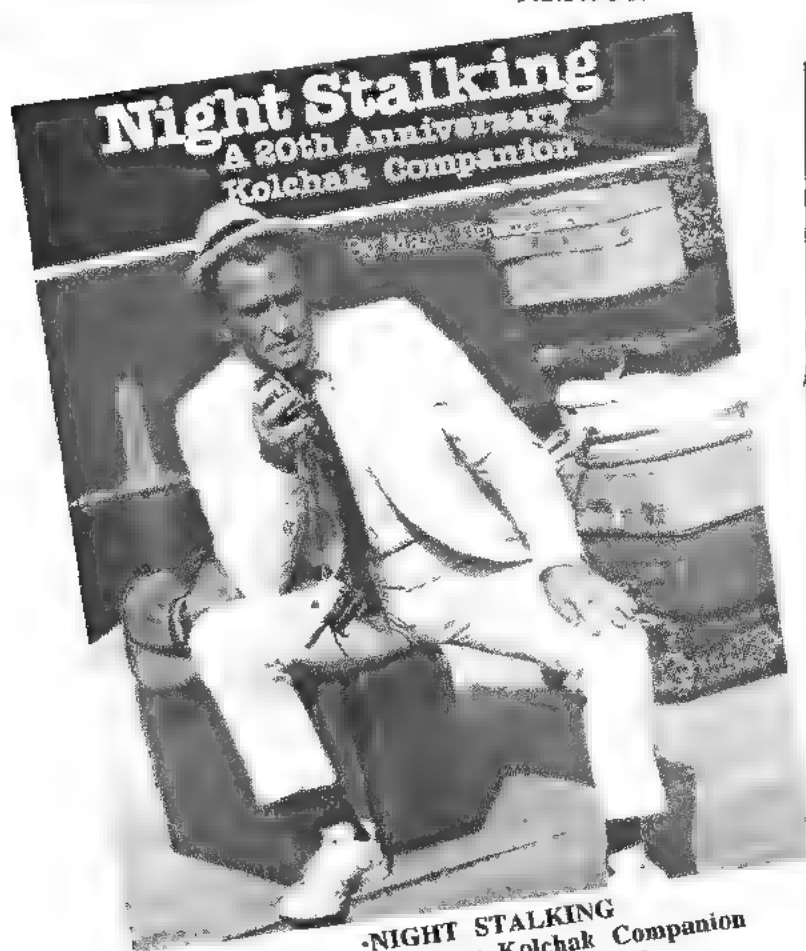
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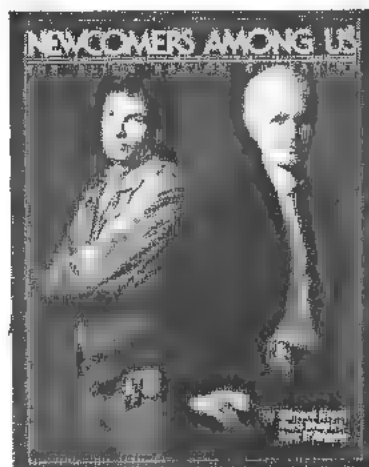


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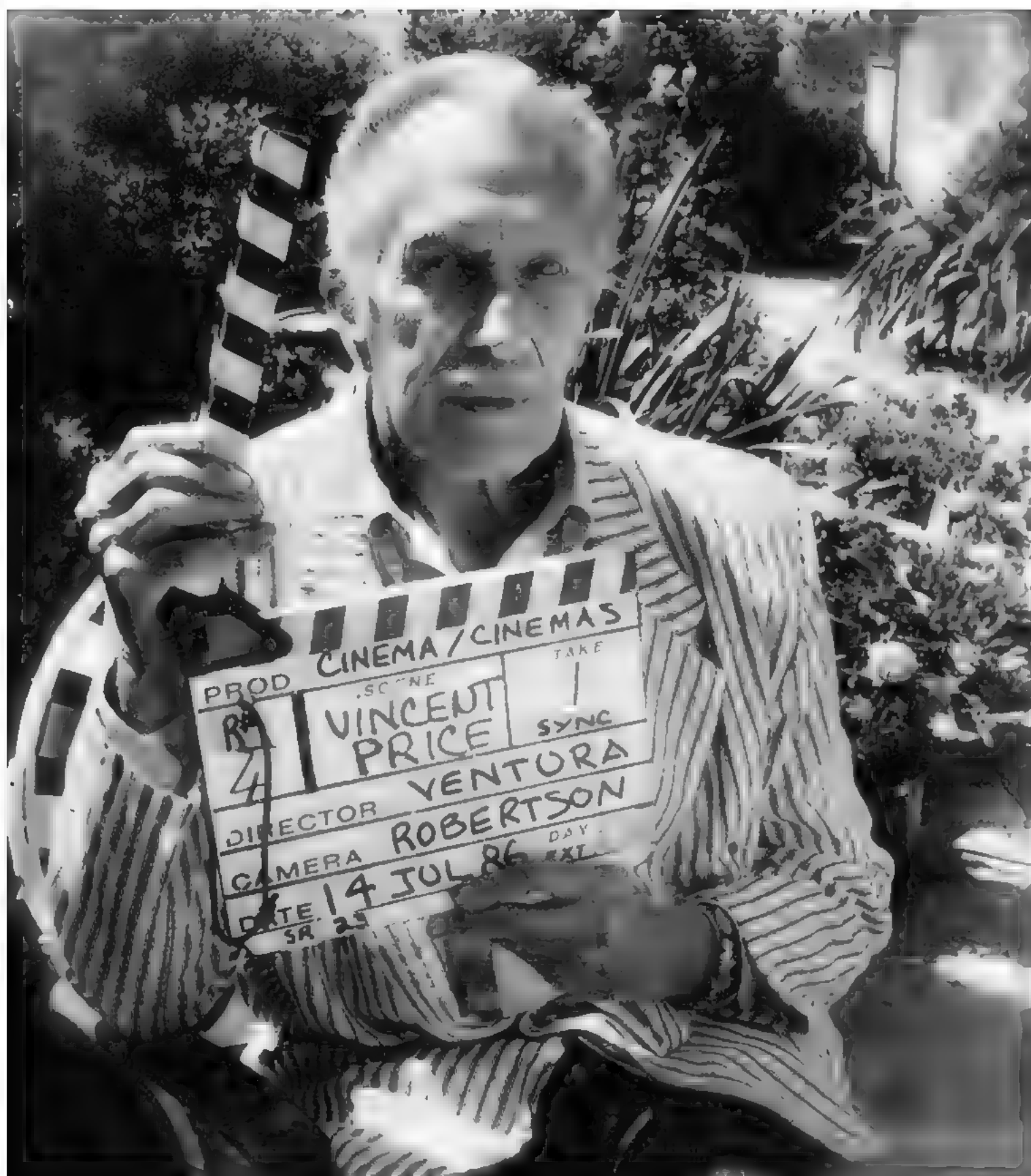




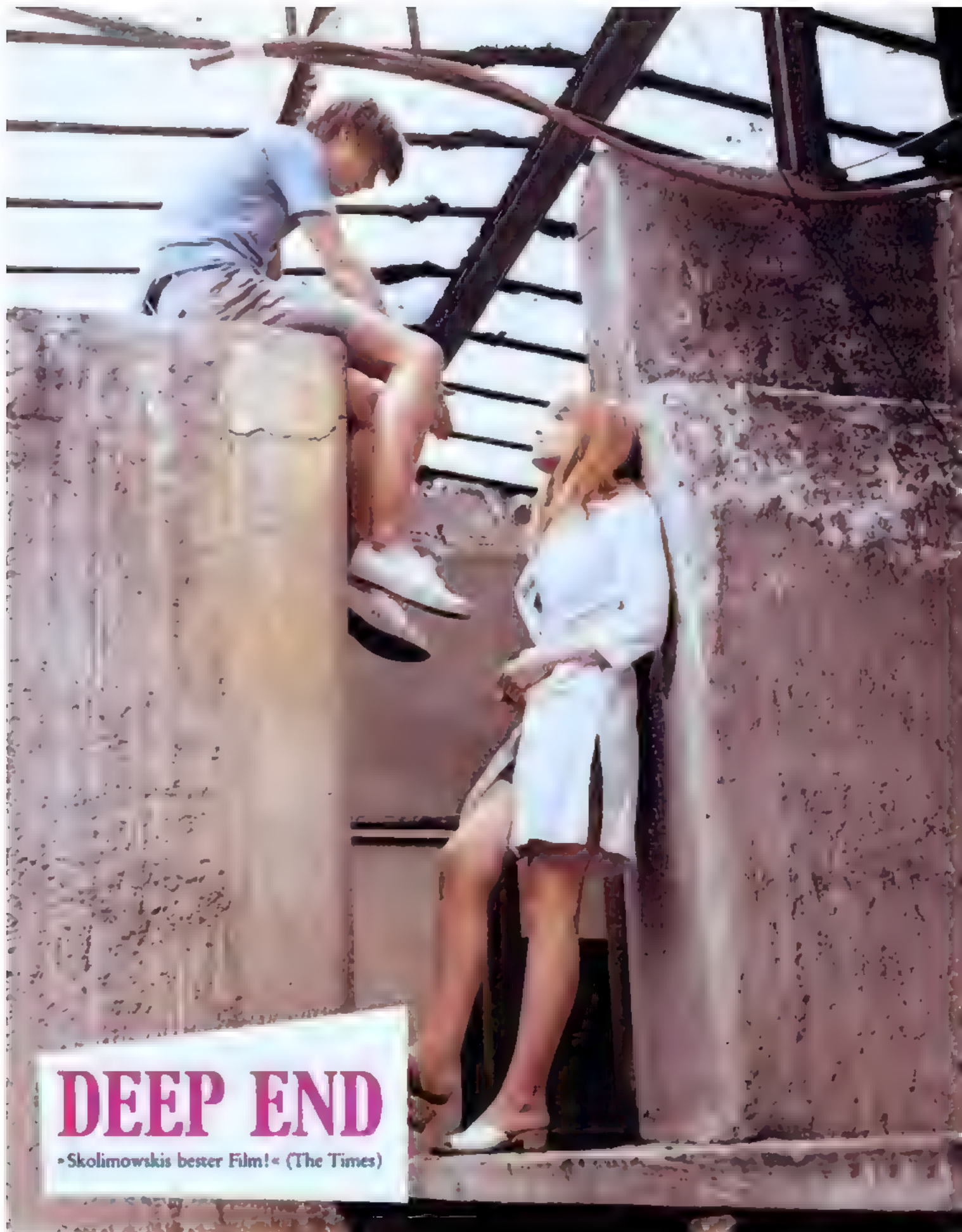


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listen for the SCREAM in the night  
look into the eyes of the creature  
who rules the land of the living dead!

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wedding night  
she must share  
the man she  
loved with the  
'Female Thing'  
that lived in the  
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the Cat!



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to love him... *...I want*  
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